CRISIS in KASHMIR

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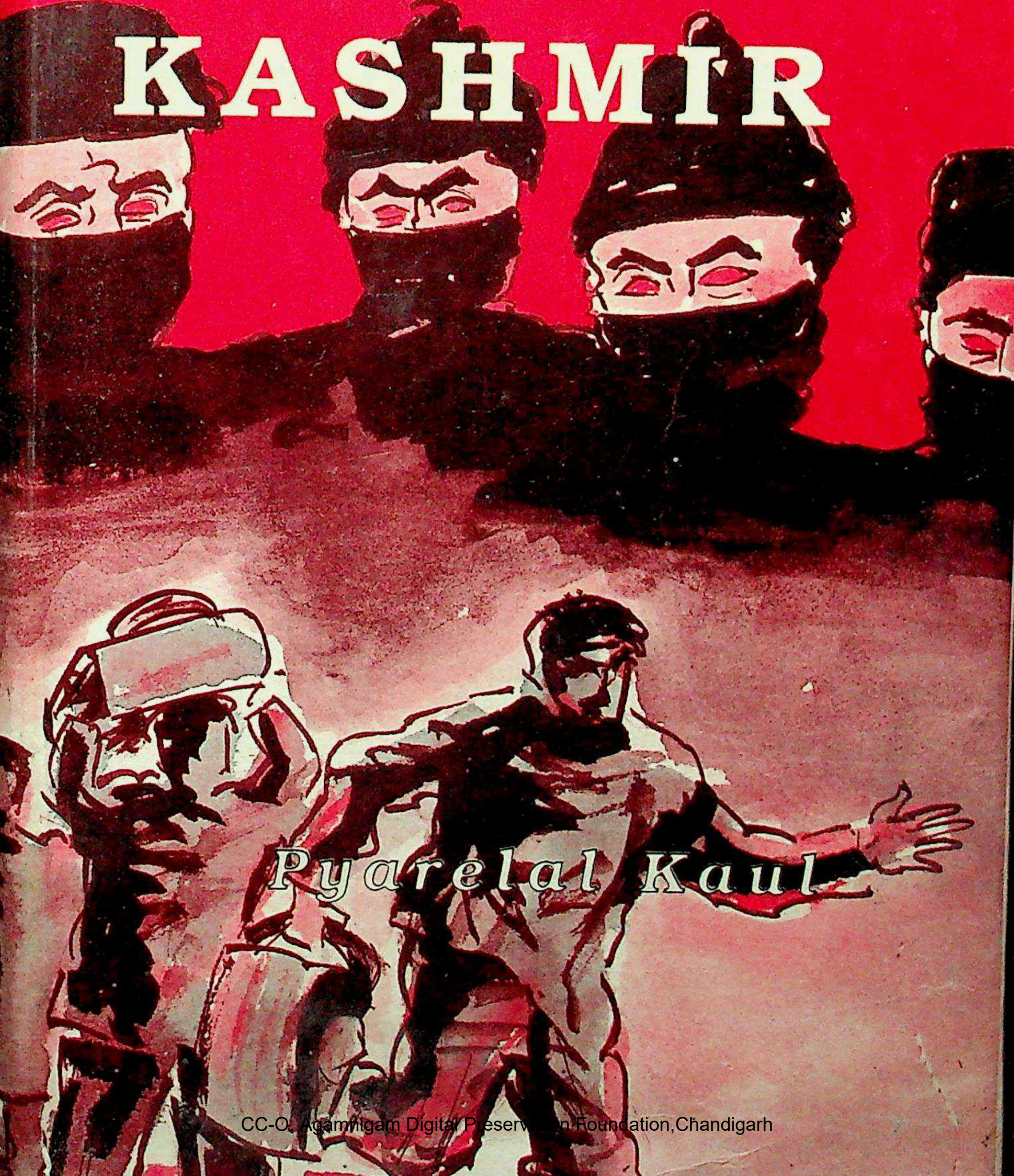
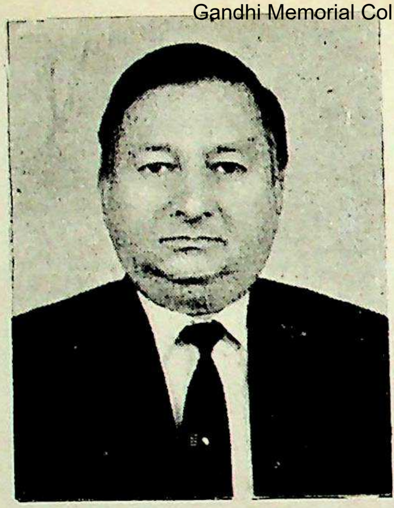


Pyarelal Kaul



A prominent Advocate and a firebrand orator, Mr Pyarelal Kaul is a life long Socialist. He joined socialist movement from his School days. For most of the period he remained associated with Praja Socialist Party and was also its J & K State Secretary. Earlier in 1961, he was Joint Secretary of its youth wing SYS, Delhi. He was office bearer of both the Socialist Organisations at different times and also of other Parties formed after merger of the Socialist Parties : he was Senior General Secretary of J & K State Janata Party and also Vice President of State Lok Dal.

He is an office bearer of Janata Dal, but has virtually dissociated himself with this party and is now Convenor of his recently founded National Struggle Front. He believes more in struggle for good of the people and the country than in political escapism.

(*Continued on back flap*)

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Crisis in Kashmir

Pyarelal Kaul

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Preface

A strange experience is to write a book when the author himself is one among the lacs of displaced persons living out of home. Known in common parlance as migrants, we are refugees indeed, for all practical purposes, away from the Valley of Kashmir physically but still there mentally.

First political agitators of Kashmir - Pt. Hargopal Koul (who was called Sher-i-Kashmir in his time), Pt. Saligram Koul and Pt. Janki Nath Koul, my late ancestors, could exercise their discretion in youth to give up their abode in Lahore and return to the Valley of Kashmir, in nineteenth century to settle in Srinagar. But we have been denied this discretion too, as it proved perilous when some migrants ventured to exercise one.

During their political struggle in Kashmir that followed their settlement, the period of ban on their return was prefixed in the Government orders whenever they were exiled from the State. But our 'banishment' appears to have no time limit.

This book is, therefore, written under these appalling circumstances. I have in fact written a book "Unrest in Kashmir" earlier in Srinagar but it did not see light of the day. At the time of writing this book that manuscript was not before me. The contents of both are, however, overlapping, but preparation of this book became imperative and inevitable, in the present situation and so got precedence over the previous one.

I have made postmortem of certain events, analysed the trends and criticised some men and matters politically. I have nothing against their person and I respect them all. Mention of any fact and event or criticism made, should not be, as such, regarded or deemed as disparagement of their position or status, nor is it intended. For fair analysis and evaluation, another aspect of certain matters, has also been mentioned. Some of the points and persons have been referred to in more than one place but in different context and according to the relevant point of time.

Before it was given to undergo process of printing some months back, I could not go through and check the manuscript of this book. Mrs. Sunita Vakil as well as Ms. Urvashi and Dipthi Ambardar have done this job. Mr. Kamlaish Vakil looked after its allied and other aspects. I owe them all thanks. Completion of printing process and making it ready for release consumed a little more time.

This book could not have been, however, prepared without the active cooperation of my wife, Mrs. Suman Kaul. I express my gratitude to her.

Pyarelal Kaul

Trikutanagar,
Jammu - Tawi,
October 15, 1991

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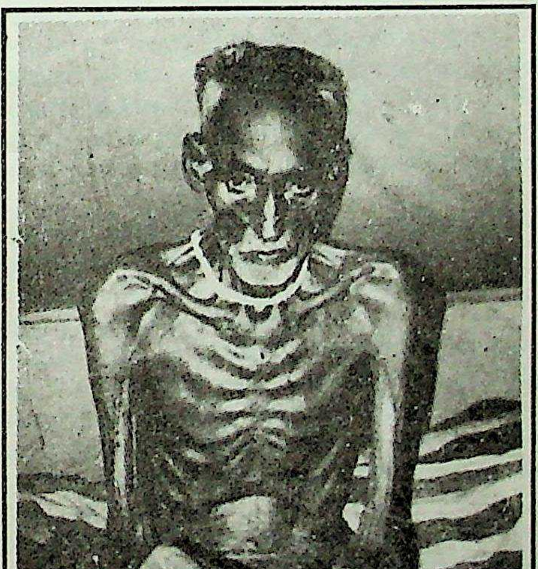
Dedicated
to the memory of
all those innocent persons
who lost their lives
during the current militancy
and also to those suffering therefrom.



Introduction

Not only a fabulous land of beauty and scenery, but also a dream of an artist, fancy of a poet, romance of a sweetheart and courtship of a lover of the nature that Kashmir is; it enchants and bewitches more a tourist than a native. It is a land of great, deep rooted and perennial culture and political strife, nevertheless.

Its high impregnable mountain peaks, snow capped; serene and placid lakes, beautiful meadows and lush greeen fields and vales, gushing springs and thundering water falls and murmuring streams, wild growing fragrant flowers and savoury fruits, varied charming birds with melodious voices, go a long way to make it a heaven. Mughal Emperor Jehangir had rightly called it "paradise on earth".

While praising Kashmir and its nature of hospitality, Brij Narayan Chakbast Lucknowi[a] said:

Zarah zarah hay meray Kashmir ka mehman nawaz
rah may pathar kay tukroon nay diya pani mujhko
(Every inch of my Kashmir is hospitable; all over
the passage, it greeted me with fresh water).

But sight fades and vision deludes at times, and all that is captivating about Kashmir, appears to have been harrowing and horrible. The "paradise" at such times recedes into abnoxious position. The otherwise colourful patches look as black spots and the Vale of weal is turned into Vale of wail. The melodious voices of the birds sound then as clamouring noise and the rhythmic ripples of flowing brooks as subdued screams of innocent people.

In the wake of militancy in the Valley of Kashmir, communal amity yielded to disharmony and disorder. The radical Kashmiri poet, Abdul Ahad Azad would have been shocked, if alive, to witness all this today. This champion of unity and humanity has in one of his verses said:

Asseh maa kudd Huondh teh Muslim beun beun
asseh maa kun loluk soudaa chhun
(We have not segregated Hindu from a Muslim,
nor is prejudiced our deal in love)

The political upheavals and misadventurism have left indelible impression on the minds of its people and on their thinking and working. It is not, therefore, Kashmir's glamour always that bewitches and captivates, but its political catastrophies and calamities too evoke interest and attract attention. Much water has flown

---

[a] Pt. Brij Narayan Chakbast was a famous Urdu poet of Lucknow. His ancestors had gone out from Kashmir to Lucknow.

down the Jehlum and when it frowns and inundates, it sweeps away all that comes in its way. The latent and real political aspect of Kashmir has perhaps never been lid off and exposed.

Is Kashmir a fantastic dream or a stark reality, with all its charm or crude paraphernalia, pleasing as well as suffocating environs? The reader will make his own independent and impartial judgement after going through this book.

The Valley of Kashmir is only a small portion of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Out of the area of 1,01,387 Sq. Kms of the State, currently under physical possession of India which forms its integral part, Kashmir Valley spreads over to 15,948 sq. Kms. only, with 31,34,904 population. Jammu region covers an area of 26,293 sq. Kms with 27,18,113 population. Ladakh region stretches over to an area of 59,146 sq. Kms. and has 1,34,372 population . The Valley is, therefore, the smallest unit of the State so far as area is concerned; it does not constitute even one fourth of the State's territory. So much hue and cry emanates from this part which eclipses the rest of the State with far larger area. The levers of power lie with the Valley of Kashmir.

Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh are the three distinct and different geographical, cultural, ethnic and lingustic units of this State. The people follow different religious faiths and persuations and belong to various cultural, social and ethnic groups and clans. The Kashmir Valley has cold climate and is overwhelmingly populated by Muslims. Most of Jammu region is hot like other plains of the country and has large Hindu population and Ladakh is mostly populated by Budhists, with dry cold climate, forming one of the highest inhabited areas above sea level in the world. Their mother tongues are as numerous and varied as these groups are, which include Kashmiri, Dogri, Bodhi, Punjabi, Pahadi, Bhadarwahi, Gojri, Dardi, and Balti. The common element among these three regions is the subjection to one common government in the State and the tie with India which some forces seek to snap. This link forms the common bondage among these three regions.

Jammu and Ladakh regions have been complaining since 1947 about the step motherly treatment meted out to them by the State Government as well as the Centre. The Budhist majority of Ladakh has been clamouring against Muslim domination of Kashmir which has created a constant tension there. The Budhists have, therefore, been demanding "Union territory Status" for Ladakh in order to forestall and avoid further inroads into and onslaughts on their religious and cultural identity, which the Government has not been acceeding to.

Kashmir Valley has a slight edge over the other two regions. In the sphere of Assembly constituencies, however, upper hand has been given to Kashmir with a view to keeping its dominance in the power structure of the State. It is in itself an outcome of communal and anti people policies pursued by the rulers and a contrive to create and maintain hegemony of Kashmir. BJP, while reflecting grievances of Jammu people, submitted a memorandum dated December 7, 1988 to the President of India. It highlighted some glaring instances of discrimination. The memorandum after referring to the terrorism in Kashmir, says inter-alia: *"This happened because, due to a series of blunders of the Congress Government at the Centre, power got dramatically transferred to the National Conference - a party limited to the Kashmir Valley, and built on a fiercely anti Jammu hysteria, cleverly clothed in progressive slogans".*

The memorandum indicates how more Assembly seats were carved out for Kashmir to the injustice of Jammu. It says further

> *"In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, when the first Legislative cum Constituent Assembly was convened in the year 1951, an undue edge was contrived by the N.C. leadership of Kashmir over Jammu in the matter of Assembly seats. Jammu was denied its due share and allowed only 31 seats whereas Kashmir was unduly favoured and given 42 seats. A vital imbalance against Jammu thus came into being in this basic sphere of the polity of the State from the very beginning.*
>
> *It may be pointed out that in Jammu region constituencies were then carved out on an average population of 85,000 and in Kashmir on the basis of about 50,000 population.............*
>
> *The undue weightage to Kashmir region in terms of Assembly seats gave a virtually statutory monopoly and dominance to the Kashmir region in the legislature and had the inevitable effect of creating a situation in which only a person from Kashmir can become the Chief Minister. A Chief Minister depending on the Kashmir vote bank alone for gaining and retaining power is bound to pamper the Kashmiri electorate by all sorts of administrative measures".*

This pampering has given some how wrong signals to most of the Muslims in Kashmir who have taken undue advantage thereof. The Muslim militants of Kashmir have, with the solid and active support of Pakistan, tarnished the image of Kashmir and have depicted and painted ugly, gloomy and dark picture of Kashmir by repudiating and negating all that was marvellous about Kashmir. Pakistan has been exploiting Kashmiri Muslims in general and the militants in particular. Coupled with the sinister policies of the State and Central rulers, militancy has caused mass exodus of the Hindus from the Valley.

The displaced persons feel pained on their plight as also on the reminiscence connected with Kashmir, which they yearn for. Their injured feelings which a migrant has given vent to, find expression in the following words :

> *"Alas! The "Kalchakra" of time has descended heavily upon this well read community. They (migrants) never dreamt of leaving their sweet homes, saying adieu to cool breeze, chinar trees, warmth of spring blossoms, multi flowered gardens of summer, tasteful juicy fruits of autumn and snow clad mountains of winter.*
>
> *..........They are forced to go from one door to another and from one office to another, for solving their domestic and official problems in this scorch-*

> *ing heat wasting their time, energy and sweat by standing in long queues which they had never experienced in their life time. Besides facing economic problems, they have a feeling of being discriminated both, by the State and the Central Governments".*[b]

To clear the land from the "infidels", whether of Kashmir or of Pakistan, is the over all policy of Pakistan. This also accounts for acceleration of migration of Hindus from Sind (Pakistan) into India. Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharief is reported to have shown slackness to protect the Hindus there. When a Pakistani Hindu delegation, headed by Rana Chander Singh of Sind, called upon him and sought implementation of necessary measures for their protection, he hinted them indirectly to cross over, as the borders were left open. Where will it lead to? If India also reciprocates it by tit for tat and keeps her borders in Kashmir and elsewhere in the country, open for people to cross over to the other side, with no opportunity to return. What will happen then? Has Pakistan ever thought over it? There is a great influx to India from Bangladesh already, mostly of Muslims.

Kashmir has been used as a pawn on the cupboard of international conspiracies. The people who assumed a disastrous role in it, will also have to suffer badly and pay for it excessively, in the long run, whatever panacea they may undergo later on. Prolongation of present state of affairs in Kashmir, therefore, will be fraught with dangerous consequences and inordinate delay in bringing about a "real normalcy" in Kashmir, will be more traumatic. To achieve this "normalcy", however, doesnot mean to have a "truce".

---

[b] This is an extract from an article "Wounded soul of Kashmir" by Mrs. Susheela Koul (Saraf) published in the Daily Samachar Post, Delhi, May 5, 1991. Mrs. Susheela Koul was the first lady journalist of Kashmir. She has, however, joined the State Education Department [illegible].

CHAPTER - I

Departure from communal politics

Maharaja Hari Singh was the last vestige in the lineage of the valiant Dogra rulers of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. He ascended the throne in 1925 A.D. His rule witnessed sustained communal and political turmoils, upheavals and movements. The troubles for his rule commenced from early thirties. Unseen hand of British Government was behind the Muslim uprising in 1931, causing communal riots. It was the price paid by the Maharaja for his patriotic utterances, made at first Round Table Conference, held in London in November 1930, favouring independence of India. The communal disturbances ensued in 1931 and after, invariably hit hard and harassed the Hindus who had to pay a heavy toll, particularly for being co-religionists of the Maharaja. Out of sheer backwardness and ignorance, some Muslims took them synonymous with the ruler and other regarded them as the one's belonging to the ruling class. Muslim vengeance against the Hindu minority was, therefore, not unnatural. The elimination of Kashmiri Hindus from political and administrative spheres and even violent confrontation with them, was as such, a part of struggle that was embarked upon by the Muslims. The position of Hindus had become precarious which inures even today in the context of Kashmir's accession to India.

Kashmiri Hindu was, however, in no better position than his Muslim brethren except that the former had from time immemorial, ingrained tendency and capacity to take up to education and learning and to have his livelihood earned from the various callings, vocations and professions connected therewith. The other avenues and sources of earnings, like trade and business for instance, or attending to manual and menial jobs, were never in his mind nor he liked to fall back upon any of these or such like sources of income for keeping his body and soul together. With the passage of time he has made debut in the sphere of trade and business.

Obviously, therefore, no actual competition or rivalry worth the name had existed inter-se the people on the ground of their religious affinity in respect of occupational sources of livelihood. Due to educational backwardness, only a very limited number of the native Muslims was in the government service as against many local Hindus, who were educationally forward. And hardly a few native Hindus were in the business as against a good number of the local Muslims. Both had their own and separate fields of earning livelihood.

The bulk of Kashmiri Hindus are hard core Brahmins, widely known as Kashmiri Pandits. They are loath and some times even averse to take up the jobs and occupations which, they feel, not befitting them and not in line with their dignity, but which the members of other communities take to willingly, without any inhibitions. Hardly was there any justification as such, for any community having acrimonious disposition towards the other, with respect to finding of respective work for earning a livelihood. Any mutual conflict on this score was not well founded, but due to communal considerations and the bias that was born out of religious bigotry and the wrong notions of infidelity. By toeing this line of approach, Muslim subjects of Maharaja Hari Singh, were able to bring themselves into political limelight and wrest certain concessions from the "Kashmir Darbar," which perhaps they might not have obtained otherwise under those prevailing conditions and circumstances.

The communal outbursts, created political awareness on communal lines, in the Muslims on the one hand, and helped them to consolidate and close their ranks, on the other. It gave a jolt both, to the government as well as to the other communities. It was community consciousness and not class awareness that became the bedrock of political edifice in Kashmir. Minor conflicts, as such, raised tensions and tensions paved way for disturbances, even communal, resulting in arrests and incarcerations of the leaders.

After communal riots of July 1931, Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, a school teacher then, emerged as a strong Muslim leader, and dominated all Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference which was formed in 1932. Police fired and killed some among the furious, instigated and insurgent Muslim mob on July 13, 1931. Against this, Muslims retaliated, committing loot and arson, and killing some and injuring other faultless Hindus. The Muslims and the popular government of the State observe 13th July, every year as Martyr's Day, which is a declared public holiday in the State. The Hindus murmur that 13th July in the year 1931 was the day of their holocaust. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, however, championed the Muslim cause and denounced the Hindus and the Hindu rule. Often than not, Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah after reciting verses from the Quran, would interpret Islam in such a manner in his public meetings, as to instigate the Muslims against the infidels. He had also uttered unpleasant words against Hindus and is said to have warned them that he would have the Pandits reduced to the state of penury and make the Panditanis (Kashmiri Pandit Ladies) hanker after the Muslims and to beg for alms.

It was the level of thinking and political understanding that the Sheikh had demonstrated in his early days of political career which he had wished to share with his people who reciprocated by listening to him in a responsive mood. Both were profited: Sheikh Abdullah, the great grand son of a Hindu convert, became thus a Muslim hero, and Muslim masses got opportunity to consolidate their ranks and forge unity; unity to wage a relentless religious war against the "Kafirs". Be they among the subjects or the rulers. Had he not fanatically identified himself with the ignorant and illiterate Muslim masses and adopted the posture of "Muslim fundamentalist", Sheikh Abdullah might not have achieved the degree of popularity and the measure of success in awakening his people that he did achieve subsequently. This attitude and the line of thinking could not lead the Muslim community of Kashmir anywhere except that some rights and concessions were obtained by them from the "Kashmir Darbar" and that some Hindus were slain, many injured and others harassed. Hindu subjects were as helpless as the Muslims were. The ruler had his own vision to see things and he would not view it from the angle of Hindu or Muslim. Every community was in its place trying to get more benefits, concessions and rights from the "Kashmir Darbar".

Accordingly therefore, by harassing a Hindu or some of them, Muslims would not profit, nor it advanced their cause. The Hindus were themselves as good or as bad subjects of the Maharaja as the Muslims were. The Hindus were themselves craving for concessions and basic rights and they were not the source of authority nor givers of the concessions and the rights. As such, the Muslims and their leadership were disillusioned, and had to dispel the misconception entertained by them against the Hindus and were bound to modify political stand they had adopted, once this consciousness dawned upon them.

The suffering subjects whatever community and religion they belonged to, had a common cause to fight for and a joint ground to achieve their rights as citizens of the State and not as Hindus or Muslims. In order to seek justice, they had to forge a joint front against the ruler, from whom the benefits and concessions could flow and who alone could confer the rights upon his subjects. This was realized by the leadership of all the communities and a need for a common platform to ventilate publicly their grievances and to press their demands regardless of the community or religion, was imperative. It opened new vistas for negotiations among the leaders of different communities for evolving a common programme and setting up a common platform for fighting the "Kashmir Darbar" to obtain the basic civil rights. Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and some other leaders of Muslim Conference were already swayed by Indian National Congress and the leadership of Mahtama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad.

The ball was set rolling by some leaders of the Hindu minority of Kashmir Valley, who were connected with a major Hindu organisation - Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha Srinagar, as it was then called. They took initiative and approached Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah on this behalf and broached the topic of coming closer to fight the "Kashmir Darbar" jointly, for securing the civil rights. The Sheikh and some other leaders of the Muslim Conference found substance in the argument of Hindu leaders and showed an inclination to work on the suggestion. As a prelude to forming a common plattorm, leaders of both the sides agreed on a number of common demands and decided to launch a concerted action for seeking acceptance of the same by the "Kashmir Darbar".

This charter of demands was signed, published and circulated in 1938 and was known as "National Demands". The signatories to this charter of demands were Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, Maulana Masoodi and some other prominent leaders of the Muslim Conference as well as the leaders of the Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha including Kaship Bandho, Prem Nath Bazaz, S. N. Peshin and Jia Lal Kilam. The main and the major demand contained in the "National Demands" was grant of "Responsible Government" to the people of the State. The formulation of "National Demands" jointly by the leaders of the two communities was an important land mark in the political history of Kashmir.

The publication of "National Demands" had far reaching consequences. It helped change political concept and strengthened the view of forming a common political platform, where the members of different communities could meet and discuss the political issues and to have follow up action without any restriction or hindrance. Muslim Conference, however, could nor provide this forum nor did Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha. Proposal for forming a separate organisation had to be mooted which would keep its membership open to the members of all the communities irrespective of their religious persuations.

In fact a joint attempt for United Front was made earlier also by the leaders of different communities. Budh Singh of Mirpur (which is now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) while holding a high post in the State government, had come out openly in support of the people's demands in 1929. He remained in the fore front of nationalist movement since that date upto the end of his life. The seeds of popular movement therefore, were sown in 1929. Later, mutual discussions were held among Kaship Bandho, Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and Budh Singh, which brought them closer and they formed a Front of first rank fourteen persons in politics. They were Saad- ud-Din Shawl, Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Ahamed Ullah Hamdani, Moulvi Mohamed Yousuf Shah, Moulvi Mohamed Syed Masoodi, Moulvi Atique Ullah, Budh Singh, Kaship Bandho, Choudhry Ghulam Abas, Allah Rakha Saghar, Choudhry Mohamed Shafi, Janiki Nath Kakroo and Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. *"Afterwards, Mohamed Afzal Baig, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq also joined this caravan and Muslim Conference was founded"* [1]

Muslim Conference had become a strong political organisation with wide popular base, being the party of Muslim majority and so its leaders had also a larger political field and wide appeal than the leaders of any other community had. Shiekh Abdullah and some other leaders of Muslim Conference, therefore, discussed the feasibility of changing the nomenclature of Muslim Conference and leaving its

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1. This para has been based on the interview of Late Mr. Janki Nath Kakroo as having appeared in the "Anantnag Times," Anantnag, February 19, 1988. In fifties Mr Kakroo was National Conference MLA.

doors open to the members of all the communities in the State. The consensus of the members was in favour of this change. To convert Muslim Conference into a nationalist party was not, however, an easy job. It was a very important decision to be taken and implemented and could not be accomplished within a short period. Hindus on their part tried to boost nationalist tendency and popularize progressive thought in Kashmir. Some Hindus actively worked for it. National High School was founded at Baramulla by Sri Kanth Kaul and others, with its subsequent branch at Srinagar.[2]

The working committee of Muslim Conference passed a resolution in June 1938 seeking conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference. The General Council of the Party approved this resolution in April 1939. The special session of Muslim Conference called for the purpose was held in Srinagar under the chairmanship of Ghulam Mohamad Sadiq. It also carried this resolution in June, 1939. The first general session of National Conference was held at Anantnag under the presidentship of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, from 30th September to 2nd October 1939. About formation of a common platform for all the citizens of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, while delivering his presidential address in the session, said:

> *"For the last nine years, I have been nourishing a keen desire that all the people of Jammu and Kashmir State should form one organisation and become one unified force, and discard all differences and discords in order to engage themselves whole heartedly in the service of their beautiful country ..... It is the result of this struggle that we find today the representatives of 36 lakh Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs assembled on one platform and under one banner with one and the same objective".*[3]

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah also alluded to the communal disharmony and praised the formation of a common platform, the accomplishment of which was not so easy. He termed this change over, as a grand revolution. The Sheikh further said:

> *"It is no minor revolution that those people who fell victim to the misunderstanding and suffered mutual hostilities and had earned disreputation in far and wide, and have shunned the differences It had appeared*

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2. The author's uncle Late Mr. Sri Kanth Koul, was a practising lawyer. He passed away untimely and before he could set up National College at Srinagar, which he ardently strived for, even on his death bed.
Another National High School was set up by Saroop Nath Raina and other nationalist Hindus at Shopian. The word "National" was started to be made popular among the masses, with the idea of disseminating nationalism. Prof. Jialal Tameeri, a labour leader in Srinagar, voluntarily surrendered his agricultural land in favour of his Muslim cultivators in adherence to the political stand" Land to the Tiller," long before Agriculture Reforms were enacted and enforced. Prof. Tameeri has passed away many years back.

(3. "Khutbai Sadarat" - presidential address by Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah delivered at Anantnag in 1939 as first president of National Conference. It is an English translation of his address in Urdu.

> *beyond expectations to bring them on one platform at least for one century but they have over come their feelings of ill will within a short period in order to become one nation. It is a grand revolution indeed*".[4]

All the members, sympathisers and leaders of Muslim Conference, however, did not join National Conference. A large number of them joined the latter under the dynamic leadership of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, but others kept Muslim Conference alive and remained with it. An important Muslim leader from Jammu, Choudhry Ghulam Abas was also initially in favour of winding up Muslim Conference and rechristening it as National Conference in order to enlarge its base and scope. He, however, resiled from this decision subsequently and went back to the fold of Muslim Conference. He clung to it even after partition of the sub-continent of India in 1947 when he desired to be transferred from the State to Pakistan occupied Kashmir as he was imprisoned by Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah after the latter came to power. Choudhry Ghulam Abas was, therefore, deported across the border in accordance with his wishes. He was one of the arch political rivals of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. It has to be seen and judged from the later political trends and events whether by formation of National Conference, Kashmir politics was really secularised and democratised or not?

Coming of National Conference into being was a revolutionary step indeed. It was also a tactful revolt of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah against "Mullaism" which had established a firm grip over Kashmir politics.[5] Birth of National Conference marked his escape from the clutches and politics of Mullas. The pivotal figure of Kashmir politics—Moulvi Yousuf Shah, kept intact Muslim Conference and owed continued allegiance to it. He had exercised tremendous influence over Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah in the initial stage. The former had acted as the latter's guide and mentor and had him introduced to the public as young leader enjoying his blessings. Sheikh Abdullah, however, no longer remained loyal to the Moulvi and tussle for leadership ensued and differences and cleavages surfaced. The followers of the Moulvi and his Muslim Conference had come to be known as "Bakras" (Goats) and that of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and his National Conference as "Shers" (Lions). Sheikh Abdullah and his party had dynamism which the Moulvi and his party lacked.

Despite combating the grip of Mullas on politics and their "Mullaism",

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[4] *"Khutbai Sadarat" -presidential address delivered by Sheikh Abdullah at Anantnag in 1939.*

[5] *"Mullaism" as referred to, means dabbling of Muslim religious peers and Moulvis and Mullas in politics, thrusting their conservative and obsolete political outlook on the people as well as making politics and party subservient to certain taboos and conventions, converting mosques into hub of main political activities and its pulpits into political rostrums, for delivering political speeches, even indiscreet, and wherefrom important political sermons, directions, decisions and commands do emanate.*

Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah had still remained its captive and was not completely free from its influence. He had retained some vital traces and traits that were innate or were developed in him during his deep association with the dynasty of Moulvi Yousuf Shah. He remained, in any case, under the grip of these traits throughout his life which turned out to be a part of his mental make that he could not escape from. His politics, therefore, rallied round the mosque and Islam. Whether in power or out of power, he would invariably start his speech, for instance, after reciting verses from the Quran and used to give an Islamic touch to his speech. He would essentially go to the mosque on Fridays with the purpose of delivering his political speech to the Muslim congregation, after prayers. At occasions, some reactions and appraisals, disclosures or decisions were made public by him in these speeches, when in power, forgetting that he was also the Chief Minister, and matters required to be conveyed from a platform other than religion and had to be meant for other residents also. His case had been like one who was building a mansion of nationalism, secularism and democracy on the one hand, and demolished the same on the other. This trend was antithesis of nationalism, secularism and democracy and is still followed and the offsprings of the Muslim leaders are making no departure therefrom. This indicates the working of their mind and importance and precedence attached to the sectarian politics by them than to secular one.

Kashmir politics virtually was never free from the influence of mosque. The official organ of Jamait-e-Islami said: "Whatever voice raised during Dogra Rule, was acted upon and supported by Muslim Conference, though the demands pertained to the majority of the State people. That is why the movement remained connected at the time of political ups and downs always with Jamia Masjid, Khankah Moulla and Hazratbal"[6].

It meant in other words that "Mullaism" prevailed in Kashmir in one form or the other, whether consciously or unconsciously and remained intact to a large extent, even after some healthy changes occurred and trends developed in Kashmir politics. It also meant that the real basis and source of Kashmir politics, were not secularism and a wave of modernisation but the Muslim pragmatism, leading to the current Muslim fundamentalism. Imbibing of modernism, therefore, could not change or do away with the main Muslim undercurrent in Kashmir politics. This polemics was and is bound to generate tensions, troubles and turmoils against all that which is not Islamic or pro-Islamic and in any case is not consistent with Muslim urges and aspirations.

The atmosphere for growth of this thought process, was created always and made congenial. In the early thirties the real centre of political activities of Moulvi Yousuf Shah and Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah was the Mosque premises of Khankai Moula, Srinagar. Later their activities shifted respectively to Jamia Masjid and

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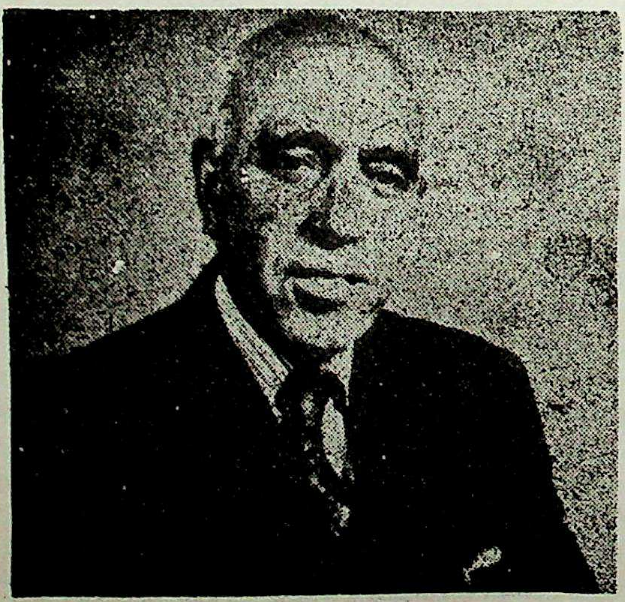
[6] *The Azan, Srinagar, August 12,1986.*

Hazratbal Mosque. Even now the separate operational head quarters of Muslim Conference (now Awami Action Committee) and National Conference are those two Mosques. This trend is followed in all other Mosques in the city and elsewhere in Kashmir. It has also played a role in giving spurt to current Muslim terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.



Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah

Chapter - II

Nationalist thought and movement, growth and hurdles

Formation of National Conference was a significant political event in Jammu and Kashmir. It induced all those to join it who bore nationalist outlook or were sitting on the fence but for a party of secular character. Many Hindus and Sikhs joined it at the very inception and other progressive elements also rallied round it. A wave of nationalism surcharged the Valley in particular. This drew the attention of various political elements, outside the State, who belonged to different political hue and colour, to this political development in Kashmir. Congress Party developed direct liaison with Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah : Socialists though in Congress then, also took interest in the affairs of Kashmir. Communists were prompted to set up a unit here. Qurban Ali, a Communist leader paid visit to the valley in this connection. Ajay Ghosh, General Secretary of Communist Party of India also visited Srinagar to explore the possibility of floating his Party unit in Kashmir.

This apart, most of the secular and progressive people of the Subcontinent held in high esteem National Conference and its popular leader Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. Some of them, particularly those having leftist leanings, extended him their hand of co-operation.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference sought to set the trail of nationalism ablaze in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But the intentions did not appear as clear and sincere as were expected. Neither any solid trail was found, nor any blaze witnessed. It finally turned out to be a nightmare. The progressive elements from the sub-continent, however, gave a revolutionary concept of a political party with radical content and programme to Kashmir. Their thoughtful contribution imparted meaningful purpose to his party. It helped growth of nationalist thought and modern outlook, to some extent. Besides Yuvak Sabha leaders, who were signatories to the charter of "National Demands", many other Hindus, unconnected with the Sabha also joined National Conference. The author's, father late Shambhu Nath Kaul, founder editor of the Vakil, was also one of them. He was its first joint Secretary of city Srinagar unit, delegate and also member of General Council later. His paper rendered great service to the cause of nationalism.

Among Sikhs, Budh Singh became one of the top leaders of National Conference. Hindu activists like Master Roshan Lal and Trilok Chand of Mirpur (now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) joined it. "Naya Kashmir", the political sketch of National Conference, underlined the programme of the party and contained the salient features of the economic and developmental plans for ameliorating the lot of common man in the State. This was a political and economic agenda and epitomized dreams of the progressive elements.

"Naya Kashmir" was formulated in 1944 with the help of communists from outside the State. B.P.L. Bedi, a leftist from Punjab and his wife Freda Bedi had also taken keen interest in preparing "Naya Kashmir". It was a blue print of National Conference, aiming at building New Kashmir. It laid bare political philosophy of the party and unfolded its approach towards the peasants and the working class as well as for social and economic justice and also for upliftment of backward classes. The moving spirit behind "Naya Kashmir" was not any religious consideration or communal concept but secular and socialist dynamism. It was regarded as a milestone in the goal of building a secular society founded on the principles of social, economic and political emancipation and justice. The State of Jammu and Kashmir had the distinction of being the first princely state in whole of the sub-continent to raise the slogan of "land to the tiller" and incorporated this in "Naya Kashmir". Landlordism was abolished without compensation and the land was given free to the tiller after popular government was installed in the state in 1947.

> *"It is based on a Socialist approach to Kashmir and Indian problems; it is concrete and factual. It envisages a State where Science will eliminate poverty; where political democracy will rest securely on economic planning and the feudalism and vested interests of the old regime will be given no quarter".*[7]

The document of "Naya Kashmir" coupled with semblance of progressive idealism, contributed to the development of nationalist thought and growth of nationalist movement in the State. All such factors had gone a long way in stemming the communal winds that came to overtake Kashmir many a time with cyclonic speed.

"Naya Kashmir" as stated above, was the outline of freedom concept and constitution for the State adopted by National Conference in 1945, which was formulated in 1944. Its preamble reads :

> *"We, the people of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and the frontier regions, including Poonch and Chinani Ilaqas - commonly known as Jammu and Kashmir State - in order to perfect our union in the fullest equality and self-determination, to raise ourselves and our children for ever from the abyss of oppression and poverty, degradation and supersitition, from medieval darkness and ignorance, into the sunlit valleys of plenty ruled by freedom, science and honest toil, in worthy participation of the historic resurgency of the peoples of the east, and the working masses of the world, and in determination to make this own country a dazzling gem upon the snowy*

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[7] *Brochure "Sheikh Abdullah" By B.P.L. Bedi and Freda Bedi.*

bosom of Asia, do propose and propound the following constitution of our State"

It was more than preamble of a constitution, aspiring too much and epitomizing utopian idealism, far from actual position and the ground realities. It was to cry for the moon. It smacks of a callous joke made to the people who were ruled by the Maharaja, within the framework of India, which exercised paramountcy over the State through Government. This kite flying was impliedly supported by another idealist visionary of India - Jawaharlal Nehru. He could not be immuned from the responsibility of turning the head of Sheikh Abdullah by installing him as Vice President of All India States Peoples' Conference. The draft of Naya Kashmir was prepared by the Communists as indicated above, in pre-partition period when they held a hazy view of India and Indian patriotism.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was therefore, accused of being in league with Communists and Soviet Russia for raising the slogan of "Quit Kashmir" in 1946, which was regarded as natural corollary of "Naya Kashmir". It was, however, not a fact that the "Quit Kashmir" slogan was raised by Sheikh Abdullah at the instance of Russia. Sheikh Abdullah would exploit anybody for his personal ends but was never anybody's man, nor was ever dependable. He could shift and reshift his loyalties within no time. But the fact remained that Russia had nothing to do with "Quit Kashmir" movement.

Was the spirit of "Naya Kashmir" kept alive and acted upon truly and without bias after popular government was installed in Kashmir, has to be seen?

Maharaja Hari Singh had conceded an important demand for establishment of legislature. The State of Jammu and Kashmir was the first Indian princely State to set up Praja Sabha in 1934 which was almost an equivalent of present Legislative Assembly. The people used to elect and return their representatives to this House. The public representatives sponsored by National Conference like other parties, were also elected to the Praja Sabha. The elected members of National Conference, however, were always Muslims. The electorate and constituencies were separate. But National Conference never sponsored or fielded any Hindu candidate from any Hindu constituency.

It depended on the performance of National Conference members inside Praja Sabha and outside it, to draw Hindus to its fold in large numbers and to enlist their support and sympathy. Sharp contradictions were, however, found at various occasions in the practice and professions of the members and leaders of the National Conference inside and outside the Praja Sabha, on some vital issues and problems. The nationalist concept and outlook was thereby, openly and flagrantly violated and discounted. At such occasions, they acted only as Muslim communalists and not as nationalists.

A change for the better was expected to come about in the approach, attitude and thinking of the erstwhile Muslim Conference leaders and members who converted themselves to National Conference. But mere change in the party nomenclature did not seemingly bring about tangible change in the behaviour and thinking of leaders of National Conference viz-a-viz the matters involving the Hindu interests and ethos or touching the communal frenzy of Muslims. It, therefore, affected the growth of nationalist outlook and movement and so the unshakable basis for communal amity could not be laid and cultivated in Kashmir.

The edifice of nationalism made to appear to the world as standing on sound and solid foundations, was all hollow and shallow and could not withstand the tests of time. It was bound to crumble down which it did. Nationalism was a camouflage to bring down down the Hindus and advance the Muslim cause. It only softened the edge and mellowed the rant.

Nationalism was never taken seriously by the National Conference leadership nor any sincere effort was ever made to embed its roots in the hard ground of truly socialist, secular and democratic State, assuring justice and equality to one and all and eliminating exploitation of them all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. It could not have, therefore, a very healthy effect on the thinking and working of the bulk of the Muslim populace. The change in party must have been accompanied by change in thinking and policy. National Conference, by and large, retained its Muslim character. If it were not so, the present crisis in Kashmir probably might not have ensued or might have possibly been averted.

National Conference was for all practical purposes a Muslim Party interested basically in welfare of Muslims. It worked for and upheld Muslim interests. Its ultimate aim was to establish an Islamic order in Jammu & Kashmir. It plunged in every matter that touched the Muslim community, thereby overshadowing purely Muslim organisations like Muslim Conference. It raised questions on any matter that had a bearing on Muslim community and contested issues that were deemed to benefit the Hindus or apprehended to undermine the tall claims of the Muslims. It discounted all those sovereign acts and measures, which did not seek to accord primacy and priority to the Muslims. The politics of nationalism (sans policy of nationalism) became only incidental to it for fighting a Hindu Maharaja in the name of nationalism, with the support of a section of Hindus. It was more a matter of convenience for National Conference leadership than an article of political faith.

In pursuance to its set policy of safeguarding and promoting Muslim interests even at the cost and interests of the Hindu community and politics of nationalism, the National Conference Legislature Party lodged a strong protest with the "Kashmir Darbar" on various national issues. Being champions of the Muslim interests, the members of Praja Sabha belonging to National Conference resigned enbloc in the year 1941 to protest against the manner of functioning of "Kashmir

Darbar ". Their resignations were regarded to have been tendered on communal considerations.

National Conference, however, tried to clarify the position on these resignations and tendered an explanation vide a tract dated August 22, 1941. One of the reasons attributed to resignations was displeasure of National Conference over introduction of Devnagari script in the School courses in addition to Persian (Urdu) script which was already in vogue. This optional script which was not obviously compulsory for and binding on the students. The National Conference explanation sought to refute the charge of communal consideration behind the resignation issue which inter-alia reads:

> *"In accordance with the aforementioned constitutional principles, National Conference Party also discharged its duties and tendered resignations. The government and some selfish section are trying to cook and fabricate stories about resignations of the Party having been tendered on communal considerations"*[8]

In the same tract besides other points raised for justifying resignations by its members from Assembly, the following paragraph finds place which makes an interesting reading and explodes the myth of "nationalism" of National Conference.

> *"National Conference believes that for salvaging Jammu & Kashmir and attaining ultimate political progress, the only way out is to maintain national unity and identity. Any measure seeking to defy this unity would be regarded by National Conference as no less than finishing the national life by consuming dreaded poison. When the government of Jammu and Kashmir decided to introduce for purpose of imparting education, Devnagari script alongside Urdu script which was in vogue, they gave option to the School boys to learn either of the two scripts. On according our consideration to the consequences of this schism creating order and with a view of sparing the country from its poisonous aftermath, National Conference had announced its opposition to the concerned government order. It clarified to the nation that out of the two opposite scripts, some students might opt for one script as medium of education and the others might take up the other script, which would not only create business and official hurdles, but would also divide the nation into two camps which would never meet again with each other. This eternal cleavage and communal bias will cause their perpetual enslavement. We are sorry that some of our natives get embarrassed on hearing about (Muslim) League's scheme of Pakistan and the same Pakistan is being created in the field of education here by the government and these very people are getting*

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(8)" Kashmir Assembly say National Conference Party nay Istafay kyon diya", printed and published by Publicity Department of National Conference.

impatient to embrace Pakistan. However, National Conference tried to stop this rot both inside and outside the Assembly but found its efforts fruitless. It was then thought necessary that on this issue also resignations must be tendered and the membership of the Assembly sacrificed".

National Conference unfolded its mind unconsciously and served the warning that in case the option for use of Hindi script was not stopped, National Conference would also raise a cry for Pakistan, thus denying the right to a sizable population of the State to use the Devnagari script. It wished to convert Kashmir into another Pakistan trampling over the aspirations, claims and rights of all those who were not Muslims. Such attitudes and policies of National Conference were more designed to thrust the Muslim opinion and create an Islamic State than to boost up the formation of a secular democratic State.

In Kashmir Valley, prior to the said order also, all Hindu ladies who were interested in reading and writing, used Devnagari script. In Jammu province also many of the Hindus were adopting this script as the medium of education. They were facing great difficulties in absence of an option for Devnagari script. The Hindus all along had lodged as such, protest with the Kashmir Darbar to give an option to the students to adopt the script of their choice. It was reasonable and there was nothing anti national or anti Muslim in it. The implied warning to the Hindus about formation of Pakistan was therefore, not only unwarranted but also deplorable and out of tune. In fact National Conference obviously wanted to transform the State of Jammu and Kashmir into another Pakistan where the Hindus had no say and only Muslim will and culture was required to be followed, adopted and nourished. Whether Pakistan or no Pakistan but the Muslim leadership in the State treated Hindus as non-entities and at the most, as second grade citizens as of now, who had to eke out their existence in Kashmir at the mercy of Muslims. They viewed the matters only from Muslim point of view and not from nationalist angle. This tendency has always created tension in Kashmir and has been the harbinger of travails suffered and troubles ahead.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah had maintained liaison with Mohamed Ali Jinnah also. Despite being the leader of National Conference, he would not hesitate to hurt the feelings of Hindus, vitiate the atmosphere with Muslim frenzy and make communal utterances that were unbecoming of a national leader. A Srinagar Newspaper of the relevant time, expressed surprise that the Sheikh tried to divide Hindus inter-se but endeavoured to consolidate Muslims and attempted to flare them up by highlighting trivial matters wrongly and with communal bias. In an editorial captioned "Qaide Kashmir per Qaide Azam Ka Prabhaw" (Influence of Qaide Azam on Qaide Kashmir) the newspaper said:

"After meeting Qaide Azam Mr Jinnah in Delhi and receiving guide lines from him' Qaide Azam Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah reached Jammu and

> *attended the meeting of National Conference Working Committee. In order to overawe the Inquiry Commission appointed by Kashmir Darbar, he got there National Conference members on it, resigned on the one hand, and on the other, taking undue advantage of non-cohesion among Hindus of the State, passed the resolution seeking to divide them into different compartments. According to the National Conference resolution, Kashmiri Pandits have been treated as separate from Pandits or Rajputs of Jammu. But Shiates have not been regarded as separate from (Sunni) Muslims. Fact is that, from the religious view point there is not even a slightest difference between Jammu Hindus and Kashmir Hindus. Contrary to this, the tenets of Shiates are poles apart from those of the Sunnis. Shiates, however, are in minority in Kashmir, they demand a separate Nayabat (area headed by Naib Tehsildar) whenever they find an opportunity. Even then Shiates and Sunnis are one according to the constitution of National Conference but the Hindus of Kashmir and the Hindus of Jammu are treated as two separate nationalities. By this resolution, the National Conference wants to take advantage of the disintegrated condition of the Hindus, and thus want to thrive on communalism".*[9]

The Newspaper further comments on the workings of the Sheikh's mind and his anti Hindu stance, and cautions him of sailing in two boats, which will leave him neither here nor there. The newspaper adds in the same editorial:

> *"Sheikh Sahib is now fully under the sway of Jinnah. The speech made by Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah at Hazratbal Mosque in connection with Id-MIlad-ul-Nabi, is the first offshoot of Jinnah's influence over him. Sheikh Sahib has taken exception to the Prime Minister's calling Kashmir as Hindu State. Does Sheikh Sahib want to remain ignorant about the fact that late Maharaja Ghulab Singh had purchased Kashmir State against rupees one crore as per an agreement and every owner has a right to consider his property as his own. Maharaja Hari Singh is owner of this State. Since he is a Hindu, as such, it is proper to call it a Hindu State. If Hyderabad, having 88% Hindu population can be termed as Nizam's dominion, why then Kashmir State cannot be called as Hindu State?.............*
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> *In his speech, Sheikh Sahib had divulged another thing which has hurt his heart. That is, during the pilgrimage of Swami Amar Nath ji, arrangements for food stuffs were made on every mileage and also of medical relief and police. Sheikh Sahib may exploit the sentiments of innocent and ignorant Muslims and infuriate them, but the fact remains that he will fall between two boats. Sheikh Sahib may perhaps be knowing*

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[9] *The "Vichar", Urdu weekly, Srinagar, 3rd chait, 2000 Bk..*

that late Maharaja Ranbir Singh ji had established a charitable Trust in his personal capacity, known as Institution of Dharmarth Trust. The heirs of Maharaja Ranbir Singh have naturally to manage this trust. It is this very trust which arranges for provision of food stuffs for the hundreds of pilgrims and thousands of Sadhus and Saints coming from India during the days of pilgrimage of Swami Amarnath ji. If any charitable institution does this work; what objection Sheikh Sahib could have in it, except that for leadership rivalry and working on the directions from Mr Jinnah, he seeks to destroy peace in the State. Now remains the question of providing medical relief and deputing of police there. Wherever thousands of people congregate, it is the duty of every government to depute there police and provide medical aid. At Hazaratbal, policepersonnel are posted more than needed. Since the time Sheikh Sahib has fully established control over Hazaratbal, the Superintendent of Police is also himself deputed there. The Hazratbal is adjacent to Srinagar and all the pilgrims return to their houses by dusk, unlike Swami Amar Nathji which is situated in a remote place amidst the mountain's and plains. As such, the question of making medical aid available here, does not arise at all." [10]

Sheikh Abdullah had been treading the path of politics in two opposite directions. It had to hit him hard, even to cause his political liquidation. It is miraculous, however, that he survived politically. This communal virus continued all through which gnawed deeper into the body politic of the State. This and similar other things obstructed the growth of nationalist and secular thought and movement in Kashmir. Had there been a Muslim Nawab ruling the State of Jammu and Kashmir instead of the Hindu Maharaja, perhaps the Shiekh would not have been so much popular and powerful nor Kashmir would have been so much plagued with political movements and intrigues. The Sheikh's communal posture found expression in different ways at different times. The present crisis is also due to the virus that was allowed to be injected into the society. And most of the members of this morbid society treat surprisingly rest of India as substitute of the Hindu Maharaja. And regard her, by and large, in the same manner.

Hindus in Kashmir were not, by and large, happy over the politics and attitudes of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference. When Jawaharlal Nehru visited Kashmir in 1945, a delegation of Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha called upon him and expressed that the position of Hindus in Kashmir was precarious. "They could not support or follow Sheikh Abdullah", they added and explained that he was not a nationalist at heart but a rabbit communalist. Nehru

[10] *The "Vichar" , Urdu Weekly, Srinagar, 3rd Chait, 2000 Bk.*

retorted and asked them as to what other option they had. He told them that they had to go alongwith the majority community and to accept Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah as their leader. "It was, therefore, not correct to tell Sheikh Sahib that he was communalist", Nehru advised the Pandit delegation and added, "put Sheikh Abdullah on the wrong by telling him that he was nationalist leader even if he were not the one".[11]

Was then Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah another Ali Mohamad Jinnah and National Conference another Muslim League? The Sheikh and his National Conference were even then nearer to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Badshah Khan and the Congress than to Jinnah and Muslim League. After 1947 also when power was transferred to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference was regarded as unofficial branch of Indian National Congress. Initially Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was a rabbit communalist but later he was blended with nationalism, though only skin deep. He had, therefore, semblance of a nationalist leader. As such, he was not averse to secularism nor was his National Conference . But he was vacillating in planning and approach. He would at times develop conflict of head and heart, mostly depending on the quantum and nature of external influence imbibed by him. His nationalism exclusively remained confined to Kashmiri fanaticism, which bordered on Muslim chauvinism, beyond which he could hardly see or conceive anything. The real difficulty arose when he blurred his vision to grind his own axe and gave precedence to his person rather than politics and this was the genesis of his trouble always. Whenever an onslaught on his blurred concept of nationalism was made from whatever quarter, he tried to resist it and upheaval occurred, then he suffered. He hardly wished to split his people into Hindus and Muslims or into Pakistanis and Hindustanis but cherished to be Kashmiris, which he thought, had no identity other than a Muslim. He would give in temporarily but would never submit permanently. He would change his strategy but not his policy. It is here that Jawaharlal Nehru erred in understanding the Sheikh. His trust on the Sheikh was therefore, misplaced. Nehru tried to put the Sheikh "on the wrong", but the Sheikh put Nehru doubly "on the wrong".

As already indicated, Sheikh Abdullah was not another Jinnah. The former had good knowledge of Muslim theology but the latter had perhaps none. Mohamad Ali Jinnah was given the epithet of "Qaide Azam" and Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was also given the epithet of "Qaide Azam" by his people. He was in addition known as "Sheri-i-Kashmir". Jinnah followed the two nations theory and adhered to his communal politics. Sheikh Abdullah did not subscribe to two nations theory as such, and retreated from his initial communal campaign. He disseminated his nationalist

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[11] This was narrated to the author by late Mr Sri Kanth Chaku who was a senior most advocate in Srinagar. He has passed away about three years back. He was himself in the delegation. Once President of S. D. Youvak Sabha, Mr Chakoo had developed left leanings afterwards.

thought and started nationalist movement in Kashmir. It was Sheikh Abdullah who carried Kashmiri Muslims alongwith him in the face of and against the two nations theory propagated by Muslim League, infuriating Muslim sentiments. Mohamad Ali Jinnah strived hard to gain some political mileage in Kashmir but failed miserably, Sheikh Abdullah being an important factor therefor. Jinnah failed to break through the nationalist citadel of Sheikh Abdullah. The latter suffered privations, tribulations and imprisonments and made other sacrifices, which the former had none to his credit.

Muslim League was making a headway in British India and National Conference was gathering momentum in Kashmir for achieving the responsible government. Muslim Conference aligned with Muslim League though it turned out to be a decimal force in Kashmir. Mohamad Ali Jinnah was unhappy over the developments in Kashmir. This naturally brought "Qaide Azam" of Muslim League into sharp conflict with the "Qaide Azam" of National Conference. Jinnah wanted to bring Sheikh Abdullah under his political surveillance, but the Sheikh knew no subjugation and was not prepared to lose his leadership or to surrender it before him. A dogmatic tussle between the two Qaide Azams ensued.

Mohamed Ali Jinnah visited Srinagar in 1944 and attended the session of National Conference. He addressed the session and tactfully expressed that the reception accorded to him was in fact the reception to the party he had the honour to represent. In his separate meeting with Sheikh Abdullah and some other leaders of National Conference, Jinnah advised them to wind up the show of nationalism and to fall in line with Muslim League. It was not acceptable to the Qaide Azam of Kashmir. He therefore, did not oblige Jinnah.

Accepting the suggestion of Jinnah would have meant inerting the National Conference and the dynamic leadership of the Sheikh. It also would have meant losing sympathies of Congress leaders which in turn meant much than could perhaps be visualised or foreseen at that point of time. It also meant adoption of non-provocative and passive attitude against the Maharaja, which the Sheikh was not ready for. Muslim League as a matter of policy, was not prepared to offend or confront the Maharaja, for that matter, any ruler of Indian princely State, even for meeting a genuine public demand; or to support any movement or agitation against the autocracy, nor would its ally-Muslim Conference. Jinnha's policy, if accepted, would have impeded the struggle for achieving the goal of "responsible government". His ally Muslim Conference called the Maharaja as "Zule Illahi" (the shadow of God). How could he then be fought out to make him concede the demand of self governance? The people's movement in Kashmir was, as such, bound to come to a stand still and the dynamic leadership to become redundant. It was not the type of outcome desired or awaited to be flown from the struggle that was relentlessly launched by the Sheikh and his National Conference. He, therefore, did not like to abandon his struggle and leave his task unfinished, nor did he wish to be under the thumb of Mohammed Ali Jinnah or his Muslim League.

After knowing the mind of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and other leaders of National Conference, Mohamed Ali Jinnah exchanged hot words and bore a grudge against them as his mission to Srinagar had failed. But it was not Bengal or Sindh where Jinnah had some appeal or relevance. He had set foot on the soil of Kashmir where the Sheikh's writ ran and who was waging a people's war against the autocracy. Jinnah could hardly believe that the land beneath his feet was slipping and he was to suffer a fall in Kashmir, his communal and sentimental policy not withstanding.

Mohamad Ali Jinnah was warmly welcomed and garlanded by the Sheikh and his National Conference when he came to their dais in Srinagar. Pran Nath Jalali greeted him by singing a popular song. "Sare Jehan say achhya Hindustan hamara" (Glorious is our India in the whole globe).[12] This popular song was sung at the instance of Shiekh Mohammed Abdullah which showed the Sheikh's Indian patriotism. It some how turned out to be a hint to Jinnah that he could not interpose himself in Kashmir and come in the way of its national movement which was a war for freedom. For Mohamed Ali Jinnah, his arrival in Kashmir was heartening, his stay heart rending and departure heart breaking: he was given a nasty good bye. At Baramulla, he was hooted and very nearly garlanded by the National Conference activisits, not with flowers but with footwears and this action created a flutter in the entire Valley. The two Qaid-e-Azams diametrically drifted away too far, leaving hardly any chance of meeting again. So was the case with National Conference and Muslim League. They had gone poles apart and to the point of no return . It was eloquent testimony to the growing nationalist forces in Kashmir, and their going even against the current, under the dynamic leadership of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and rejecting Jinnah and his politics in toto.

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12. Mr. Pran Nath Jalali was a young Communist and a student leader then in Kashmir. He is also among the founder Trade Union leaders in Kashmir and has suffered long incarcerations during "Quit Kashmir" movement and after. He was till recently Chief of the PTI bureau in J & K. Mr. Jalali is a migrant and his residential quarter in Srinagar has been ransacked during this militancy and his possession snatched forcibly in connivance with the government.

CHAPTER-III

Autocracy and struggle for Responsible Government

Jammu & Kashmir- a three tier State comprising Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, was first welded together by the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Dogras followed the suit and consolidated it further. They extended its borders upto Tibet on one side and to Palmir near Russia, on the other. Every patch of its land, its plain beautiful Valleys, and tough terrains and hazardous and unsurmountable mountain peaks, are soaked with and perched by the hallowed blood of valiant Sikhs and Dogras. One of the world's ablest military Generals of the time, General Zorawar Singh lay in deep slumber in the far flung area of Tibet. His military genius, valour and spirit of expedition and adventure, have left indelible mark on the high peaks and mountain rocks of Himalayan region. The territorial area of the State was expanded to over 84,000 Sq. miles before 1947. The Dogras formed an important and enviable nucleus around which the subjects in all the three regions of the State rallied. They were the unifying force to hold and wield together all the three regions.

After Praja Sabha (Assembly) was brought into being, the demands for conferring more and more rights were raised. The State of Jammu & Kashmir was the first princely State in India where the people had risen to launch political movements, suffer incarcerations and tribulations and wrest more and more rights from the autocrat. it seems that the political awareness was more in Kashmir than in any other princely State of India.

True, far enlightened and virtuous was Maharaja Hari Singh himself, who was willing to devolve more responsibilities on his subjects provided they were fit to shoulder the same efficiently. He intended to lift up his people from economic thraldom, educational backwardness and morass of ignorance: His thoughts were noble and deeds appreciable. He had, therefore, distinguished himself from other princes and constituted a class apart. He never intended to observe unnecessary discrimination between one section of the people and the other, nor liked to segregate them in Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christains or even between Jummuites and Kashmiris. Although born as a Dogra in Jammu, yet he was as good a Kashmiri as a Jammuite he was. He could understand and speak Kashmiri with as good an accent as he spoke Dogri.

He was conversant with culture and problems of Kashmir as intimately as he was familiar and concerned with that of his own region. No doubt, Kashmir Darbar treated Kashmiris as a non-martial race and not fit for army service. As such they (both Hindus & Muslims) were given scant even no representation in the State army. This evoked severe criticism against the Dogra rulers by Kashmir leadership and was regarded as a regional bias and prejudice on their part, though the Maharaja had a passion for being fair to his subjects. "Justice is my religion" announced Maharaja Hari Singh at the time of his coronation in 1925. He endeavoured his best to stamp out illiteracy particularly among Kashmiri Muslims who were, unlike Hindus, not willing to undergo the ordeal of education. In order to impart education to their children, the Maharaja compelled them to receive it free from Government Schools and allured them by supplying free books and stationery and granting scholarships. These schools were known as"Jabri Schools" as enrollment in these Schools was almost a "compulsion". He started separate schools under Adult Education Scheme, for imparting education to adults. In the face of his limited resources and other problems, the Maharaja contributed comparatively more to the welfare of the people than the popular governments did later.

A Muslim Officer who had held various high posts in the State Government, has given his dispassionate views about the period and reign of Maharaja Hari Singh and the popular governments that followed the autocracy, in the lines quoted below:

> "*It is wrong to think that the people of Kashmir were happy in the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh and all the necesities of life were plenty and within the reach of every person. but they were not certainly as unhappy as they find themselves today. Poverty and ignorance were there, but they were content with their simple and unsophisticated mode of existence when contrasted with the artificiality and corruption of modern life. They had some perception of the small inequalities in society which they disliked but accepted as inevitable and unavoidable* ".[13]

He has further stated the manner of governance by the Maharaja in the following words:

> "*The Council of Ministers governed the State on behalf of the ruler. There were no speeches and no ceremonies for opening a bridge, a school or a hospital. The Ministers and other officers of the government did not indulge in extravagance for the fascination of the people on such occasions. There were no secret service agencies and secret funds, no plots and political intrigues. The Maharaja was uncompromising in his independence and always rejected the idea of dependence on politicians by refusing to grant any concessions or other undue favours to them. Education was free. Poor students who had some merit were given scholarships*

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13. These passages have been quoted from the booklet, "The curse and political catastrophe of Kashmir", (Pages 31 to 33) written by Mr. N. Deen and published from Srinagar in the month of July, 1977. Mr. Deen was a Muslim Officer, who had joined the State service in the Maharaja's time and retired long back as Deputy Commissioner. He joined the Srinagar Bar some years ago.

> *for the prosecution of their studies. Sweets were distributed to school children on the birth of heir apparent or some new members of the family, poor and needy persons received rice and clothes. Recruitment to gazetted appointments was made on the basis of competitive examinations without any regard for blood relations and recommendations. No social and political distinctions or other temptations were accepted to ignore the claims of the weaker members of the society. The rule of law prevailed and the administration of justice was not partial. Life was free and without any fear of domination from inside and outside. The nature of the government and its influence on the character of the people could hardly permit opportunist and anti-social elements to claim the leadership of the people. It is the government that is the source of all good and evil. The character of the official class and the citizens depends on it. The Ministers, and Judges we had then, were men of great integrity and exceptional ability, strictly impartial and scrupulously honest. There was nothing like moral degradation and hypocritical demonstration in their character. They were incorruptible in their official dealings with the people. They knew the law and implemented it without any fear or favour. There existed no political interference or other influence that could stop them from doing justice. There existed a small hereditary class of big landowners who had more debts than assets and a large number of servants and destitute neighbours to feed and care for: The ruler was a benevolent despot and the people felt more secure about their rights. The land revenue was not high and other taxes were unknown".*[14]

The propaganda mania of the leaders of popular governments which is many a time found divorced from actual facts and realities, is to get popularity on the ground of this baseless propaganda. The governments spend huge amounts now-a-days on such propaganda which was not a part of the government policy during the Maharaja's time. Comparing the two systems, he further says in his analysis as under :

> *"His (The Maharaja's) administration did not spend money on publicity and propaganda for presenting a false and exaggerated picture of its achievements. The legislature was only a debating club and it could easily be ignored for its non-cooperation. But it was not a body of Yes men. The members enjoyed complete independence and they would hit back where it hurt the most. The annual budgets were small but balanced ones without*

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14 & 15. These passages have been quoted from the booklet, "The curse and political catastrophe of Kashmir", (Pages 31 to 33) written by Mr. N. Deen and published from Srinagar in the month of July, 1977. Mr. Deen was a Muslim Officer, who had joined the State service in the Maharaja's time and retired long back as Deputy Commissioner. He joined the Srinagar Bar some years ago.

depending on loans and subsidies." [15]

A graphic picture has been given above, though in all brevity, about the state of affairs prevailing in the time of Maharaja Hari Singh. It impliedly drew a comparison of the Maharaja's rule with the later popular governments. This has been the difference between the Maharaja's autocracy and the people's democracy in Kashmir with the glaring defects and disadvantages becoming the order of the day in popular regimes which were conspicuous by absence in the Maharaja's reign. The rule of the Maharaja, baring poverty, political communal upsurges, can be treated as one of the best rules in the princely states of the Sub- continent.

For achieving the great things by Kashmir Darbar, an educationist of Kashmir paid tributes to Maharaja Hari Singh in the following words : [16]

> *"If Lawrence* [17] *or Young Husband* [18] *were to come back to life and revisit Kashmir today, I feel sure, they will have to search for new adjectives and epithets to re-depict the country and its people for, they will find everything having undergone such an alteration for the better that the earlier books would read to them as accounts of an old bygone age. Indeed Maharaja Hari Singh Ji inaugurated the New Age when he succeeded his great uncle of revered memory"*. [19]

The agitation for attainment of "Responsible Government" did not achieve anything substantial. It was a failure as the Maharaja 's reign was fairly tolerable. He had given clean administration to the people and formulated various development schemes and plans, started implementing them for the benefit and good of the general public. The agitation, therefore, did not evince public support except in Srinagar and some other parts of Kashmir Valley. The Hindus and Muslims of Jammu, by and large, did not associate with this movement. Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders were lodged in jails. National Conference members of the Praja Sabha staged a walk out from the Assembly in protest. This walk out was criticised as these members represented only a fraction of the people of the state and not the whole State and thus the hurdles sought to be created in the proper functioning of the Praja Sabha (Assembly) were uncalled for. The National Conference members of the Praja Sabha later on resigned from its membership on the ground of having failed at various occasions to mould the House to their view point. Subsequently in mid forties. Sheikh Abdullah became dejected himself and wanted to raise any other slogan in order to attract the attention of general Muslim masses in the State. An important non - Kashmiri Muslim of the State, Dewanzada I.S. Khan Abdullah of Hunza has given his impressions on Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his movement

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16. A Prof. of History, Late Mr. B.K.Madan was Principal of S.P. College Srinagar.The extract quoted is from his write up published in the Birthday Edition of the "Vakil" Srinagar, September 28, 1945.

17,18 & 19. Both have been celebrated British authors on Kashmir. The former was in the service of Kashmir Darbar and the latter was British Resident in Kashmir.

for "Responsible Government" in the following words:

> *"Those in government services had long forgotten the great leaders, tne non-Kashmiri Muslims had soon discovered in the Sheikh a narrow minded Kashmiri who would ever fight tooth and nail against their employment in the Valley. And thus for some time last the only people amongst whom his popularity had currency were the starving mobs of Srinagar, and as soon as they got bread, even they showed signs of indifference towards their great preacher. Mr. Abdullah had witnessed this change and was greatly alarmed"*.[20]

He further states while unfolding Sheikh Abdullah 's communal mind and discriminatory attitude adopted towards Kashmiri Pandits and regional bias that he suffered from:

> *"Mr. Abdullah has added a few years to his age and lot of mob experience to his knowledge, otherwise he is the same old preacher of 95% jobs for the Kashmiri Muslims. He did succeed to a very great extent in transferring the loaf of the Pandit to the Kashmiri Muslim. The innocent Pandit children crying for "bread" still echoes in my ears, but the socialist Mr. Abdullah would not pay any heed to them. He was not a socialist then, he was a communist of the lowest type for maintaining Kashmir for the Kashmiri Muslim and if Jammu, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and other provinces had joined him in the movement with a view of securing jobs in the Valley they were not only wrong but they were selfish too. Has he agreed with the Pandits for equality of bread and if so he is a socialist?"*[21]

Discounting the justification for responsible government and praising the Maharaja's government, he further says:

> *"We have got a government, and one of the most enlightened governments in India. We have got an Assembly in which the various communities of the State are duly represented and henceforth the Assembly will be the fountain head of all law and order. Where is the irresponsible Government if it be not with the heads of fame hunters and self seekers?...............Everything could have been and should have been done constitutionally in the Assembly , and it was not a part of Mr. Abdullah's task, had he been a peace -loving citizen, to excite the peaceful people of Srinagar with imaginary dangers to religion and thus once again attempt to throw the country into chaos. But thank God the*

20, & 21. These excerpts are reproduced from a brochure titled "Truth about the Kashmir agitation" written by Dewanzada I.S. Khan Abdullah of Hunza . Hunza was then a Chieftain of Jammu & Kashmir and was under suzerainty of the Maharaja till October, 1947. After the raid on Kashmir, arranged and organised by Pakistan in 1947, Hunza ceased to be a part of the State of Jammu & Kashmir as it was forcibly annexed by Pakistan.

> *followers seem to have a better knowledge of their leader than the leaders had of their followers."* [22]

Khan Abdullah of Hunza had also criticised the National Conference members for their walk out from the Assembly (Praja Sabha). He says:

> *"The Conference members have walked out in the Assembly. What does this mean? Is the teaching of sedition one of the items on the Conference Party 's programme for the achievement of Responsible Government ? Is the misleading of thousands of illiterate but peace-loving citizens of the State another item on the programme of the Conference party for the attainment of Responsible Government? Is in brief, the throwing of a peaceful country into chaos the only way of securing Responsible Government? And if it is so, the Conference Party's walk-out in the Assembly is just and right; otherwise silly, foolish, illegal, unconstitutional and most irresponsible.".* [23]

Autocracy, howsoever benevolent it may be, is not after all a substitute for democracy. It has its own shortcomings and inherent contradictions. The Maharaja, therefore, could neither be immuned from the maladies and pitfalls of his autocratic rule, nor could he remain aloof and unaffected from the movement seeking the end of his rule. The winds of modernity, spread of education, thoughts of popular government and elimination of economic exploitation had permeated the boundaries of this State. Resurrection of the movement that was started initially with strong communal overtones, was now on different footing and with different political perspective.

The final goal to be achieved by National Conference was "Responsible Government under the aegis of Maharaja Hari Singh." This demand was vigorously raised in 1938: National Conference spearheaded movements for achieving this goal. It meant getting maximum share in running the State Government but not eliminating the Maharaja or liquidating autocracy in the State. Legislative Assembly (Praja Sabha) was already functioning which consisted of 75 members, of whom 40 were elected. The house was authorised to discuss budget and introduce and pass resolutions and bills. After the legislation was passed it received assent of the Maharaja and it became law for the State. Praja Sabha (Assembly) and the Council of Ministers helped Maharaja Hari Singh to run the administration and govern the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Ministers were mostly appointed from outside the State. With the demand for grant of "Responsible Government", however, the Maharaja

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22 & 23. These excerpts are reproduced from a brochure titled "Truth about the Kashmir agitation" written by Dewanzada I.S. Khan Abdullah of Hunza . Hunza was then a Chieftain of Jammu & Kashmir and was under suzerainty of the Maharaja till October, 1947. After the raid on Kashmir, arranged and organised by Pakistan in 1947, Hunza ceased to be a part of the State of Jammu & Kashmir as it was forcibly annexed by Pakistan.

tried to tap the local talent and also to give representation to the local political parties and groups. Ram Chandra Kak, a Kashmiri Hindu was appointed as Prime Minister in 1945. He was a man from the administration side and unconnected with any political group or party. Two other Ministers in the Council were members of Praja Sabha. Being the elected members of the House and representatives of the public, these Ministers, out of the total five Ministers in the Council, were native subjects. These were Mirza Mohamed Afzal Baig from Kashmir and Captain Ganga Ram from Jammu. This came to be called as dyarchic system.

It is note worthy that leader of National Conference Legislature group was Mian Ahmed Yar Khan and not Mirza Afzal Baig. Khan was a State Subject but non-Kashmiri speaking Muslim, hailing from non Kashmiri speaking area-Muzaffarabad (now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir). National Conference dominated by Kashmiri Speaking Muslims as it was, recommended Mirza Baig for being appointed as "popular" Minister and not Mian Ahamed Yar Khan, also an Advocate. This linguistic, regional and ethnic bias even now subsists in Kashmir. [24]

This was not only insult to Mian Ahamed Yar Khan as leader of National Conference Party in Praja Sabha, but an affront to the whole non-Kashmiri speaking Muslim community in the State. Even after attempting to secularise and nationalise the politics of the State and consequent formation of National Conference, the consideration of Muslim and Hindu and Kashmiri and non Kashmiri always weighed with the leadership of National Conference, which sustained both regional and ethnic bias. This prejudice was, therefore, imbibed by the people as well. Consequently the outside Muslim forces who were supporting Kashmiri Muslims, became indifferent. Sheikh Abdullah, as such, started rethinking about winding up of National Conference and reverting to Muslim Conference.

In 1945 an unhealthy trend had again emerged in Kashmir politics: Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah wavered to abandon the path of his nationalism and wished to go back to pursue Kashmiri Muslim politics. But the evil was nipped in the bud. The General Secretary of National Conference Maulana Mohamed Syed Masoodi had gone to his home place for some period: Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra officiated as General Secretary in his place during his absence. The Sheikh had a letter sent to the Muslim members of the Working Committee of National Conference through Karra, expressing therein that National Conference was getting unpopular with the Muslims and the need for winding up National Conference and merging with Muslim Conference had arisen and, in the alternative, other ways and means to popularize the party among the Muslims, were to be pondered over, in a confidential meeting to be held on the date fixed. It was clarified that the letter was written at the behest of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. This letter of invitation and intimation for participation in the meeting fixed, was despatched confidentially to the Muslim members of the working Committee alone and non-Muslim members were ignored and excluded altogether.

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[24] ***Late Maulana Mohd. Syed Masoodi was a Muslim Scholar and theologist but a non Kashmiri speaking Muslim. He was for long a first rank leader of National Conference. Due to Kashmiri linguistic and ethnic bias, he always suffered a set back. The late lamented Maulana has very recently been killed by the militants in Kashmir.***

Raja Mohamed Akbar Khan, a working committee member of National Conference from Mirpur got irritated over the contents of the letter and the secrecy maintained from non-Muslim members. He was the only Muslim member who called his Hindu colleagues of the party in the area and placed the letter before them much before the scheduled meeting was to take place. After discussion for hours, Raja Akbar Khan announced his decision that he would not join Muslim Conference but would keep aloft the banner of National Conference alongwith his non-Muslim colleagues. The matter got exposed and alongside this, the doubtful political anticidents of Sheikh Abdullah again came to the fore.[25]

This was a jolt in advance to the National Conference leadership and so the idea of winding up of National Conference was abandoned. This tendency had far reaching consequences. It not only perverted the course of national movement in the State but also created confusion in the politics and receded the popular demands into background as some of the party rank and file began to lose enthusiasm and also faith in the leadership. Kashmir Darbar also did not like to pay any heed to their demands under the circumstances. This innate feeling and prejudicial mind is stated to be the cause for Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah 's suggestion to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1948 to restrain the army from making any further advances for recapturing the non Kashmiri speaking areas, which was also the advice tendered by Governor General Mountbatten but on different political considerations. The Sheikh feared that the Muslims of non Kashmiri belt of the State, the areas that had come under forcible occupation of Pakistan, were people with fighting nature and might not accept him as their leader. He also feared that those Muslims might join hands with the Hindus of Jammu region, who were also non Kashmiri speaking and thus formed a majority to bypass him. As such, they would not allow him and his National Conference to come to power or retain it. On such and other considerations, the Pak occupied areas, some of which at least, could have been recaptured without much resistance as Pakistan army was on the run, were left without conquering back.

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[25] *Master Roshan Lal was National Conference activist at Mirpur (Now under Pakistan occupied Kashmir) in pre partion period and is now living in Jammu . A former MLC , he is since running a newspaper "Sach" which was founded by late Raja Akbar at Mirpur. He also confirmed it and told this author that his local National Conference leader, Raja Mohd. Akbar Khan expressed a strong protest on this volte face of Sheikh Abdullah and asked his Hindu comrades to fight out this tendency. Then the Sheikh changed his mind..*

Sheikh Abdullah and National Conference were once upon a time very serious and keen to have "Responsible Government" which they had regarded as panacea for all ailments. During the course of his presidential address delivered at Anantnag in 1939 as first President of National Conference, the Sheikh referred to the demand of Responsible Government and said:

" *On the basis of experience gained by National Conference, its main objective is the achievement of responsible government. The leaders of National Conference are sure that once the responsible government is established, the people's hardships would go* ."[26]

He further stated in his presidential address:

> *"The movement run in the State of Jammu and Kashmir for achieving responsible government , the banner of which is upheld by National Conference , is a fair, sacred and democratic movement. It is demand of the time."*

The foregoing lines reveal that National Conference attached priority to the demand for "Responsible Government." This demand was subsequently referred to, by another President of National Conference, Budh Singh in his presidential address:

" *This demand has assumed great importance and on all sides, whether cities or countryside, this demand alone is being discussed. While casting smaller demands into background, the people are dedicating themselves to the task of achieving responsible government as they have been fully convinced that all their hardships are due to the irresponsible government . These hardships will go as soon as this system of government comes to an end* ." [27]

The struggle for achieving the goal of responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja had continued unabated. But the patience of National Conference was running out. It could neither dominate Assembly nor could dictate its terms. In order to express resentment against the government and to give spurt to the feelings of the people, National Conference called back its Minister Mirza Afzal Baig who resigned as Minister. National Conference, therefore, changed its stand viz-a-viz achievement of responsible government. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah issued a statement on 22nd August, 1946 in regard to it and, inter alia, said:

> *"Recently the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference Working Committee reviewed the farcical character of the dyarchic experiment and decided to withdraw its representative from the Council of Ministers. Accordingly, Mirza Mohamed Afzal Baig resigned from the Ministership.*

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26. Khutbai Sadarat - Presidential address by Mr Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, delivered at Anantnag in September 1939.

27. Khutbai Sadarat-Presidential address delivered by S. Budh Singh in annual Conference of National Conference held at Srinagar between 22 to 24 August, 1941.

and returned to the opposition benches."

The Sheikh also criticised appointment of Mian Ahamed Yar Khan as Minister and termed it as conspiracy against the popular movement in Kashmir. Baig 's resignation, afforded Mian Ahamed Yar Khan opportunity to pay back the National Conference leadership in the same coin. After resignation of Baig, Khan was appointed as Public Works Minister in the Maharaja's government. This development was much resented by National Conference but they appeared helpless and could not do anything substantial except to criticise the action vehemently.

To appoint local persons as Minister, both out of the members elected to Praja Sabha (Assembly) and outside of it, was a step towards achieving the goal of "Responsible Government". Maharaja Hari Singh thereby afforded a chance to the representatives of the people to share the crumbs of power. In the process of transferring power to the people under the aegis of the Maharaja, who was the indispensable link among the people of the three different regions of the State, the appointment of "popular Ministers" was an important step. This political development was perhaps not discernable in any princely State of India. It was healthy and smooth but for the hurdles and political aberrations created by National Conference. Even on the eve of partition of India in 1947, when neighbouring provinces of Jammu & Kashmir, were suffering from communal tensions and disturbances, the conditions were satisfactory in the State. The situation worsened only when Pakistan instigated the local Muslims in vulnerable areas and sent armed tribesmen, who forcibly entered the territory of the State, destroyed the peace and resorted to killing of Hindus and Sikhs. Praising the Maharaja's action in bringing the local men at the helm of affairs of the State, preserving peace and law and order, the Public Works Minister, Mian Ahamed Yar Khan publicly said while addressing the audience in an open function :

> *"I want to make no secret of the fact that this has been made possible only because we have learnt how to live like a joint family as co-sharers of happiness and sorrows of one another. This is the advantage of having our own men to manage the affairs of our Government. His Highness the Maharaja Bhadur is a true leader of the country. He has given us the true lead. Now that he has been able to secure the services of a .... as Prime Minister and representatives of the people from the Praja Sabha are associated with him as Ministers, the entire face of the things has changed. It is now for us to co-operate. ...But, as you will undoubtedly appreciate no progress can be possible in a disturbed atmosphere. I have no doubt in my mind that we people shall not be influenced by the disturbances in the neighbouring province. We have the noble example of His Highness before us and must follow it."* [28]

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28. *Speech made by Mian Ahamed Yar Khan, then P.W.D. Minister at a public function held at Bishnah (Jammu) and quoted from Government journal, "Jammu & Kashmir Information," April, 1947.*

Would the "Responsible Government" be fair and better than the autocratic one that function under the command of Maharaja Hari Singh? The question might not have been answered correctly before independence but apprehensions entertained about it came out true later on. People of the State of Jammu & Kashmir were dismayed on the manner and method of working of the popular governments that came into being ultimately. These governments in nature and practice, however, without comparing with the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh, were less of a democracy but more of a mobocracy which besides developing other evils, created as much indiscipline in the administration as in the ranks of public life with deep rooted and all pervading corruption in the the State.

all pervading corruption in the the State.

CHAPTER - IV

Challenge to the Maharaja's Authority

Without pursuing the demand for attainment of "Responsible Government" to its logical end, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah jumped over to another slogan, "Quit Kashmir." This posed a total challenge to the authority of the Maharaja. The demand for Responsible Government inevitably receded into background in the face of new stance adopted by Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. On the analogy of "Quit India" movement, the Sheikh raised the slogan of "Quit Kashmir". It required Maharaja Hari Singh to vacate Kashmir and hand it over to the people who would be the masters of their own destiny. It was an ultra revolutionary stand, quite consistent with the modern political thought and democratic urges of the people. At the same time, it was a crucial stage too, in the life of National Conference;crucial because it could wipe out National Conference and its leadership.

Acharya J.B. Kriplani discounted this slogan when he visited Kashmir as Congress President in 1947. Replying to the question of a pressman, he expressed that the British were the foreigners and they had to vacate from India. But added that Maharaja Hari Singh was a son of the soil, how could he be asked to vacate from the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Kriplani had the understanding that Sheikh Abdullah would not bring about accession of Kashmir with India, but Maharaja Hari Singh alone could do that, being the only competent legal authority to accede or not to accede.

Slogan for "Quit Kashmir" was, however, a superfluous and was not to yield anything. But it was not without a cogent argument to feed the public. Kashmir was purchased by Maharaja Ghulab Singh from the British Government against payment of Rs. seventy five lakhs vide Treaty of Amritsar. The people of Kashmir were not chattels, the Sheikh argued, who could be purchased and enslaved. This deal should be scrapped, he demanded, and added that the people would then automatically get freedom. Before his arrest, Sheikh Abdullah delivered this speech and said inter alia:

> *"Sovereignty " is not the birth right of a ruler. Every man, woman and child will shout," Quit Kashmir". The Kashmiri nation has expressed its will. I ask for a plebiscite on this question."*[29]

The mind of Sheikh Abdullah was set on plebiscite and consequent independence of Kashmir as far back as in 1946, even prior to the freedom of India. While this idea haunted him all along his life, Jawaharlal Nehru was worried over his arrest and other developments in Kashmir. " *Both as the President of the All India States Peoples' Conference and as a Kashmiri, I have been greatly troubled by the recent developments in Kashmir*." said Jawaharlal Nehru in a statement. He, however, made it clear that the policy of States Peoples' Conference was to demand "Responsible Government" under the aegis of the ruler" he said in a statement :

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[29] *The Tribune, Lahore, May 26, 1946.*

> *"Many questions have been put to me about the new orientation given to the popular movement in Kashmir with the demand for Quit Kashmir based on the Amritsar Treaty. It has been, and is, the policy of the All India States Peoples' Conference to demand full responsible government in all the States under the aegis of the ruler who is to act as a constitutional head of the State. That has also been the policy of the Kashmir National Conference of which Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah is the President and leader............Personally I think it was unfortunate that a marked variation in the policy both of the All India States Peoples' Conference as well as of the Kashmir National Conference should have been made without the full consideration of the respective bodies.........I should like to make it clear that the policy of All India States Peoples' Conference remains what it was-responsible Government under the aegis of the rulers. Indeed no one can change it except the Conference itself. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah himself was the Vice President of All India States Peoples' Conference and he chose to flout the policy of the Conference."* [30]

Some of the leaders of National Conference complained that Sheikh Abdullah never discussed the matter before he raised this slogan nor the working Committee was taken into confidence on such a vital issue.

It was sedition that Sheikh Abdullah and Shyam Lal Saraf were charged with and prosecuted by the State Government. Saraf had immediately endorsed the demand of his leader openly in a public speech and denounced the Maharaja. It got them confined in detention and many other leaders and workers were also arrested and imprisoned. An agitation ensued. Ghulam Mohiu-Din Karra became a legendary hero and shot into fame as Bulbul-e-Kashmir (Nightingale of Kashmir). He went underground and ran the agitation. Others were detained except Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq who evaded arrest and fled to Lahore and remained in close contact with Congress leaders. The two mosques - Hazratbal and Khanka Moula in Srinagar became the centres of National Conference activities as both the mosques were under the supervision and control of "Shers". On every Friday, one or two party activists Muslims or Hindus, used to speak against the Maharaja before the Muslim congregation, that used to be in the mosque premises for offering Friday prayers, and thus would court arrest.

The sheet anchor of Sheikh Abdullah's politics as also that of his organisa-

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30. *Kashmir Today - Edited by Bakshi Gulam Mohamed.*

tion, be that Muslim Conference or National Conference, has always been one of the exploitation of religious sentiments of Muslims and their religious places, which the other Muslim parties have tried to emulate. The attempts to secularise politics, and flashes of nationalism have been only comic interludes in the whole drama of political tragedies, enacted over the decades in the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

In Srinagar and some other towns of Kashmir Valley, the movement some how remained alive and the main activities sprang and forthcame within the precincts of the mosques. It was again a proof of nexus between mosques and politics. The politics of Kashmir, therefore, did not truly converge on secular, socialist, nationalist and democratic movement. The other side of the same coin has been a tussle for leadership and not a fight for assertion of dogmatic politics, not even for vindication of any idealism or upholding of any values in politics. This has created conflicts underneath, which caused many a time crisis of one nature or the other, including the current one. The people have been experiencing inevitable consequences of such double faced politics with conflicting situations coming to the surface. Such policies pursued in politics have been supported by Indian National Congress all along and not even by Muslim League in the past. This explains the contradictions in the political personalities, in their stands, their practice and professions. No consistency has ever been shown, least of it adhered to, faithfully.

The "Quit Kashmir" movement as it was, did not extend its tentacles beyond the Valley of Kashmir. The Valley constitutes a small area of the territory of the State. But Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference always wanted a share out of proportion, to control and dominate the whole State, thrust their opinion on the State and seek its compliance by rest of the State. The Sheikh had a knack to get things done for himself by taking cover of one party or group at one time and then deserting it after his problem was over and aligning with another group or Party at another point of time to suit his interests. He would not allow himself to get lost in political or ideological wilderness. Those who understood this trait of the Sheikh's character, withdrew even from his proximity and those who did not perceive it in time like Jawaharlal Nehru, drew nearer to him and fell into his trap. In the process, Congress was a casualty and not Muslim League. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference were gainers and Jawaharlal Nehru and his National Congress were loosers. It resulted in bungling of Kashmir "situation" and taking of wrong stand in the Security Council.

Sheikh Abdullah was a strong and powerful leader in Kashmir Valley, but he was not a State level leader. He was therefore, no force in Jammu as he was in Kashmir Valley. That is why he was a consenting party to check the further advancement of the Indian army from beyond the cease fire line that was created, as mentioned already. It was, however, not agreed to by the then Commander Thimaya (later General Thimaya). Nehru and the Congress always gave in before the flirtations of the Sheikh. The other Governments have been no exception to it. They even now kneel down before the Kashmir militants. With the degree of popularity that the Sheikh enjoyed in Kashmir, gave him value of political nuisance, which was discounted and disparaged by Jinnah but appraised high by Nehru. He always blackmailed on this count and used to get an upperhand. Nehru was chiefly responsible for maintaining his nuisance value in the hope to utilize that in turn for his support in which he failed miserably.

To give moral boosting to the people of Kashmir during "Quit Kashmir" movement, Jawaharlal Nehru alongwith a team proceeded to Srinagar. But Nehru was served an order by Kashmir government at Kohala (now under Pakistan occupied Kashmir) on June 19, 1946, under the Defence of Kashmir Rules. His entry in the territory of the State was banned. He identified himself with the people of Kashmir and opposed and offended the Maharaja by his rigid stand that he adopted in favour of Sheikh Abdullah. He also arranged Defence Counsel for him and engaged Asaf Ali and Diwan Chaman Lal to defend him.

Jawaharlal Nehru became almost harsh when he was stopped by the State government at Kohala and was forbidden to advance. Maharaj Krishan Dhar, Governor of Kashmir, served upon him a warrant to this effect. He said to the Governor in an intemperate tone that Maharaja Hari Singh should know "I am the future Prime Minister of India,"Nehru warned and added, "He will lick my shoes." This was at once flashed to Maharaja Hari Singh who in reply expressed that "he (Nehru) will lick my shoes before I lick his." [31]

This antagonistic behaviour against each other annoyed both of them and created mutual rancour between the two personalities which had the tremendous bearing on the future course of Kashmir history. It complicated the whole matter. This personal ego of Nehru and his passion for vindicating Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and yearning for his release, drifted away the headstrong Maharaja. It later created problems in the matter of "Accession", as the patriotic Maharaja could not reconcile with Nehru's policy and did not like to come to any understanding with the Government of India headed by Nehru as Prime Minister. The way Nehru involved himself in Kashmir for waivering Sheikh Abdullah and discarded dependable Maharaja Hari Singh, may have satisfied the vanity of Nehru and served the ends of opportunist Sheikh Abdullah but it did not serve the Indian interests. India has paid and is even now paying dearly for it.

In answer to the charges levelled against him in the court of Sessions Judge Srinagar trying him for sedition, Sheikh Abdullah resiled from the slogan of "Quit Kashmir." While pleading not guilty, he clarified that his stand meant a change in the system of governance. He wanted the Maharaja to grant full responsible

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31. *This is based on the information collected from Mr. Lala Koul who was in the State service and retired as Chief Accounts Officer in 1965.*

government, he explained. Replying his charges in writing, Sheikh Abdullah said:

"I have, however, all along sought the alteration of policies and measures and vital change in the system of governance by legitimate and civilised means, for it is the birth right of man to shape and mould the law by which he must live" .[32]

He further qualified his statement by saying:

"The State and its head represent the constitutional circumference and the centre of this sovereignty respectively. The head of the State being the symbol of the authority with which the people may invest him for realization of their aspirations and the maintenance of their rights".[33]

Sheikh Abdullah and Shyam Lal Saraf were, however, convicted and sentenced to three years separate imprisonment on account of each charge, notwithstanding the written apology tendered separately by Sheikh Abdullah to Maharaja Hari Singh.

As indicated earlier, the "Quit Kashmir" slogan was raised in breach of the decision of All India States Peoples' Conference by no other person than by its own Vice President Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. This was perhaps in pursuance to the "alternative means" that was probably in the mind of Sheikh Abdullah to popularize his National Conference among the Muslims of Jammu & Kashmir, which he had desired to discuss with his Muslim members of Working Committees. He, therefore, implicitly acted upon the confidential letter that was written to the Muslim members of the National Conference Working Committee in 1945 for reverting to Muslim Conference or finding alternative ways and means to popularize the Party among the Muslims. Obviously, therefore, the Sheikh did not bother for political and organisational ethics and moral inhibition when he wanted to exploit Muslim sentiments for his personal ends.

It was manifest that British Government in India was preparing for winding up and transferring power to Indians. The Sheikh, therefore, tried to create a situation under the cover of Congress sympathy to have his ship steered clear of the two waring factions, seeking or opposing partition of India, before independence was granted or partition was effected. After independence of India, he feared that he could not enjoy the absolute power as head of Independent Kashmir.

Jawaharlal Nehru and his Congress could not realise the tactful political game that Sheikh Abdullah was playing against them, surprisingly with their help and support. Sheikh Abdullah duped the Congress and Indian States Peoples' Conference in the name of secularism and democracy. He could not achieve his goal of Muslim independent State of Kashmir, without keeping them in good humour and without their support which was always forthcoming to him. He was not the only force in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the Maharaja and his government would have cleverly isolated and humbled him. The Maharaja was under pressure

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32 & 33. The National Herald, New Delhi, April 30, 1948.

survived politically despite his apology to Maharaja Hari Singh. For the troubles in Kashmir and the crisis that has brewed up, both Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and Jawahar Lal Nehru cannot depart from their responsibility.

India was going to achieve freedom and the fate of Sheikh Abdullah was in the doldrums, which could have taken a worst turn also. Had not Jawaharlal Nehru become Prime Minister of independent India, no body would have known the fate of Sheikh Abdullah, which certainly would have been different from the one he enjoyed. And certainly the deep crisis engulfing Kashmir may not have been there at all.

Maharaja Hari Singh

CHAPTER - V

End of the Autocracy

With the midnight stroke on August 15, 1947, India awoke to freedom. She joined the world community of independent nations, but not without paying too heavy a price and suffering an irreparable loss. Subcontinent was dismembered, Pakistan appeared for the first time on the world map. Indian nation was split and a new Pakistani nation had come into being. The rigour of pain was mitigated by the revelry indulged in due to the independence of the country. Before their exit from India, the British had granted three options to the princes of "States": to join the Dominion of India or of Pakistan or to remain independent. Beset with adverse political circumstances, created partly by Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and partly by Jawaharlal Nehru, Maharaja Hari Singh became indecisive in taking the final decision with regard to the future status of the state. After partition of India, he executed "Stand Still Agreement" with Pakistan. India, however, refused to sign this agreement.

Jawaharlal Nehru had nourished a grouse against the Maharaja as the latter's government had detained the former after "Quit Kashmir" movement was launched in Kashmir as mentioned already. The first Prime Minister of Independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru when visited Jammu after some time, made no secret of his grouse against the Maharaja during the course of a public speech made at Jammu and expressed that the Maharaja had got him detained in 1946 for entering Kashmir territory knowing that he (Nehru) was the prospective Prime Minister of India. Nehru wanted to settle the account of his friend, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah with the Maharaja, in which he had got involved personally. He, therefore, paid the Maharaja in the same coin when the time came.

Maharaja Hari Singh was aware that Nehru-Abdullah axis would give him anxious moments. He had, therefore, all the apprehensions of suffering reprisals at the hands of Nehru in case he signed Instrument of Accession in favour of India. They lacked mutual trust and confidence in each other. The Maharaja's position became precarious. Clash of personalities ruined the State.

This endangered the existence of the State of Jammu & Kashmir as it was on August 15, 1947. The survival of the Maharaja himself was in peril. The coveted eye of Jinnah was on Kashmir. Pakistan was, therefore, creating circumstances to trample it over, even forcibly and illegally. It had vast territorial contiguity with Pakistan. Both of Kashmir's main roads ended up at her borders. Ostensibly the state had no link road with India immediately after the country was partitioned. Under these circumstances, the State seemed to have no option but to approach the governments of both, India and Pakistan, to execute "Stand Still Asgreement".

Jawaharlal Nehru and his Government was keen about Kashmir's Accession to India. They paid for it heavily. Under Radcliffe Award, Lahore was to have gone to India and not to Pakistan. The Arbitrator Radcliffe, announced to the representatives of India and Pakistan that Lahore had fallen to the lot of India. Pakistan representative Justice Munir protested thereupon. But Radcliffe did not agree with him and plainly told him that according to the norms and principles laid down and followed for demarcation of areas and boundaries between India and Pakistan, Lahore had to go to India.

India, however, wanted to have surface link with Kashmir. In this desire she lost Lahore and this important and historical city of Northern India got sacrificed on the altar of Kashmir. At the time of actual declaration of Radcliffe Award, Hindu Sikh majority city of Lahore was surprisingly shown as part of Pakistan. It annihilated Hindus, Sikhs not only of Lahore but in the whole of West Punjab (Pakistan). As against Lahore and its suburbs, Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur (Tehsil Pathankot being a part thereof) was transferred to India under this Award. This area formed India's surface link with the State of Jammu & Kashmir. At the cost of Lahore and Hindu Sikh population of the area, India was connected with Kashmir. It is said that Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, persuaded Radcliffe through Lord Mountbaton, Viceroy of India, who became first Governor General of the country after partition, to award corridor to India, linking her through road with Kashmir. The British Government was also interested in India's road link with Kashmir in order to convert Kashmir into a bone of contention between India and Pakistan.

Radcliffe then appeased Pakistan by transferring Lahore and its suburbs to her. The National Conference leadership had come to know about India's sacrifice of Lahore for the sake of Kashmir.

The Prime Minister of the State Ram Chandra Kak wanted to have a guarantee for independence of the State, from both the adjoining countries. Beset with acute and serious problems as the State was, he thought that the "Stand Still Agreement" would grant the Maharaja respite to think cooly about the future of the State. But Kak was not to continue for long as Prime Minister. His services were terminated and Janak Singh, a relation of the Maharaja, took over as Prime Minister in stop gap arrangement. Finally Mehar Chand Mahajan was tipped as Prime Minster of the State.

Jawaharlal Nehru was perhaps expecting too much from the Maharaja, least knowing that his trust on the friendship of Sheikh Abdullah was misplaced. The trump card for accession was lying with Maharaja Hari Singh and not with Sheikh Abdullah but the power to accept the Accession was with Government of India. Ordinarily, the Accession could not have been refused. Sheikh Abdullah was not at all a factor in the matter of Accession. Nehru was unnecessarily dragging him in it only to give him more importance so as to dictate terms to the Maharaja and to vest the Sheikh with absolute power. Even if the Sheikh had desired to accede to India, he could not have : for, he had no legal authority. He was lacking the power and competence ab-initio. If he had mattered in the Accession and Accession was made possible because of him, what was the need then to send Patiala troops followed by Indian forces to repel the attack and drive out Pakistani invaders from the State (barring some portion)? After lapse of British Paramountcy, the sovereign Maharaja could himself invite Patiala troops or forces from kingdom of Nepal or for that matter, from Russia or any other country to help him to fight back and drive out Pakistani invaders from every inch of the terriority of his State. The Maharaja did not do it nor everthought of doing it. What he did, was a great scarifice and a patriotic gesture: he exercised his lawful authority and power to bring about Accession of his State to India. Where do Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference come in? This sacrifice done and patriotic stand taken by the Maharaja was not aimed at handing over the State to the Sheikh or his National Conference as a "Mahar" in marriage. It was to merge with India and form part of it. The history has been distorted deliberately and the people kept ignorant purposely about the real facts. Maharaja Hari Singh could accede even to Pakistan if he had so chosen and the Sheikh and Nehru could not have refrained him from doing so, nor were they in a position to do so. They would have been in that case, helpless and the Sheikh would have faced the worst fate. Prime Minister Nehru was, therefore, pressurizing the Maharaja to release Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and all other National Conference detenues, arrested in connection with "Quit Kashmir" movement ,unconditionally before any negotiation's could be held about acceptance of "Stand Still Agreement" or execution of "Instrument of Accession".

It, therefore, delayed the decision about the Accession. Every day's delay was dangerous. The Maharaja was not willing to relent. Both sides, became rigid. Entire state was facing a dilemma. Pakistan had no scruples. She defied "Stand Still Agreement".

Mohamad Ali Jinnah was bent upon to grab Kashmir. Although he was lucky to get Lahore and its suburbs for Pakistan, surprisingly, yet he was not prepared to lose Kashmir, which he had termed as a blank cheque in his pocket. India's getting a foothold on the land, connecting her with Kashmir, had worried him. He, therefore, wanted to communalise the Accession issue and create anarchy in the State and snatch and annex it forcibly before too long a time elapsed.

All supplies to the State which had to be routed and passed through Pakistan, were, as such, stopped by Pakistan Government. Economic stalemate was, therefore, witnessed in Kashmir. Pakistan betrayed Kashmir and imposed economic blockade with the desire to seek the Maharaja's surrender and Accession to Pakistan which the Maharaja was not willing to, at all. Taking undue advantage of the circumstances, which were further complicated by the Pakistan's blockade and obstinacy of Government of India, Mohamed Ali Jinnah thought the conditions were ripe and conducive to have armed intervention in the State with the view of annexing the State forcibly with Pakistan. He sent armed tribesmen followed by regular Pakistan army to make forcible entry into the State territory to capture it after creating pell mell and chaos. They entered the State from different sides and provoked and instigated the local Muslims against the "Kafir" Maharaja in order to seek annexation of Kashmir with Muslim Pakistan. Wherever they entered and reached, atmosphere was surcharged with communal tension and violence. They killed large number of local Hindus and Sikhs, the rest tried to flee to safe areas. Instances and woeful tales of tyranny, loot, arson and killings are countless and the head hangs in shame on such inhuman acts of "human beasts".

Maharaja Hari Singh saw no alternative but to release Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and other detained National Conference activists to satisfy Nehru, who was worried to save the Sheikh. Tribesmen were advancing and tension and panic had gripped the entire State. All National Conference prisoners alongwith Sheikh Abdullah were, however already, set free. The Maharaja thought that Nehru might have been propitiated by this gesture which he was not. He was not playing fair to the Maharaja and wanted to please Sheikh Abdullah and above all to satisfy his own vengeance. Had not Nehru taken very rigid stand on Sheikh Abdullah and other National Conference detenues, and Maharaja Hari Singh not having acceded to India, the fate of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference would have been the worst. Even the Sheikh and some of his party men might not have been left alive by the marauding tribesmen and by Pakistan herself.

Maharaja Hari Singh approached the Government of India through his emissaries to accept the Instrument of Accession and send army to the State to save it from the treacherous attack mounted by Pakistan's tribesmen. But Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree to the Accession unless Sheikh Abdullah had asked for it. Every minute and hour was valuable and mattered. Hindus and Sikhs were being butchered every moment wherever the feet of the marauding tribesmen had set on.

But that did not evoke sympathy or mercy in the mind of Nehru as he was more keen about paving way for Sheikh Abdullah's coming to absolute power. His delay in accepting the Maharaja's Instrument of Accession created havoc in the State and caused further killings of numberless people. Advancement and success of Pakistan tribesmen meant danger to the life and existence of Sheikh Abdullah as well. He had already sent his family to Indore to escape any likely danger and physical violence.

Tribesmen were knocking at the doors of Srinagar, which was to fall within a day or so. The Srinagar airport was also to fall in the hands of Pakistan tribesmen within 24 hours. The anxious State Prime Minister Mehar Chand Mahajan, finally told the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi, that in case he(Nehru) refused to accept the Maharaja's Instrument of Accession, he had clear instructions from the Maharaja to go to Lahore and to accede to Pakistan to save the people and the State from disaster and devastation. Nehru even then did not accept the Accession unless Sheikh Abdullah asked for it. He was very adamant, overlooking the national interests and unheeding the cries of the innocent and worried population, for the sake of Sheikh Abdullah who had already reached there and appeared on the scene. He requested Nehru to accept the Instrument of Accession. Nehru then accepted the Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State on 26th October, 1947. Indian army was sounded and Patiala forces were first rushed by air to Kashmir on October 27, 1947 to drive out the Pakistan tribesmen who were supported by Pakistan army.

This is how the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru laid low the dignity and prestige of the Maharaja and demoralised him for the sake of Sheikh Abdullah whom he raised to the skies and turned his head that even the "Accession" was accepted only after his approval. Nehru's attitude, therefore, did tremendous moral boosting to Sheikh Abdullah. In other words, Nehru wrongly manipulated all this to create an obligation of Sheikh Abdullah in the matter of Accession, so that he could eliminate Maharaja Hari Singh completely and hand over total power to the Sheikh. It denigrated Indian interests on the one hand and on the other, created wrong impression in the mind of Muslims that no Accession to India could have been possible without consent of Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues, which became the added source of trouble. It also created an impression on them that the Accession would last only till they wanted it. Nehru was instrumental in creating this conflict and uncertainty, rightly or wrongly, among the Muslims about the Accession issue which the nation faces now with added dimensions.

It gave the Sheikh cheeks to act despotically in the State first as Head of the Administration later as Prime Minister of the State. It, therefore, gave him an upper hand to uproot Indian bases in Kashmir, subsequently, a mention of which will be found in the following pages, and which Nehru could not perhaps perceive or realise at the outset. The Kashmir issue is a testimony to the bankruptcy of Congress statesmanship and also its incompetence and shortsightedness in handling the situation firmly, properly and effectively.

Subsequently, the Government of India interfered and the contractual liability of the State towards the Prime Minister Mehar Chand Mahajan was finished. He was relieved much before the expiry of his term of contract. The Sheikh instead got appointed as Prime Minister of the State by Maharaja Hari Singh. Loosing no time thereafter, Government of India pressurised the Maharaja and stripped him off all his powers. He was eliminated from the scene and ousted from the State unceremoniously. No other prince in India , even those who opposed and resisted accession to India upto the last and contrived plans and hatched intrigues to defeat attempts of Government of India to seek Accession of their States to India, were also not meted out such a hostile and contemptuous treatment.

For all other things, unlike other princely States of India, special status for the State of Jammu and Kashmir alone was considered, engrafted and retained. Why was not then the retention of Maharaja Hari Singh considered and permitted? That would have been useful to deal with the special problems. Maharaja Hari Singh was a son of the soil and very popular in certain sections of the people in the State and could have proved a formidable rival to anyone, more so to Sheikh Abdullah. Had he abandoned his title and status to join active politics, he would have been helpful to India and might have created lots of difficulties in malfunctioning of Sheikh Abdullah and resisted his sinister political moves.

There was no logic in granting preferential treatment and special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir other than to appease the Sheikh and the Muslims. It works as discrimination, not only against the erstwhile "Indian States" but also against the pro India elements in the State, besides being against the national interests . It also borders on political dishonesty and blackmail. If the institution of Maharaja did not survive and rightly so, why the special status for Kashmir was engrafted and made to survive, when none of the Indian state was granted any special status? Consideration of national interests and elimination of discrimination should have been the sole guiding factor for the Union Government and the framers of the Constitution. The time will find its way to retrieve the situation. This discriminatory policy and behaviour touched the psyche of pro-India nationalists. They regard it as intentional disregard to their sentiments and fundamentalist Muslim psyche treats it as recognition of their political superiority as well as autonomous and separate entity of the State from the national mainstream. It was to have ultimately boiled down to fully autonomous (Independent) Kashmir. They persisted and persued in this direction and worked on this premise by hook or crook and by all means and methods; peaceful, cunning, terroristic and armed. The question may be posed : If departure in case of Kashmir was deemed essential and so "Special Status" was conferred on it, why then the exception was not made to retain the Maharaja as an effective head of the state to subserve national interests? It should not be mistaken or misconstrued as a support to the system of autocracy but its mention is made only as a matter of principle, actuated by patriotic considerations. The consequences are before the nation. What was done, was not consistent with the national interests and was implied invitation and instigation to the leadership of Kashmir to make political somersaults. It is the genesis of political instability and uncertainty as well as troubles and crisis in Kashmir. This is how the autocracy in Kashmir has been brought to an end which pavedthe way for installation of a democratic and popular government thereafter. Link between

Kashmir and rest of the country was supposed to be strengthened through popular government. The current spectacle in Kashmir exhibits as to what "achievement", if any, has been made. Elimination of autocracy nevertheless, was an epoch making event.

Kashmir was thus saved, thought many; Kashmir was rescued believed others. Nehru thought it was an end of the problem; it was in fact, the beginning of the trouble. Nehru made sentimental rather than political approach to Kashmir, flattered, as he was, by ephemeral friendship of Sheikh Abdullah. He had not a realistic diagnosis of the malaise as Prime Minister of the country, which called for political approach and required vision of a statesman and thrust of an administrator.

The rule of the Maharaja, however, had to go as also the institution of autocracy, whether there was Sheikh Abdullah or no Sheikh Abdullah and whether there was any struggle or no struggle against the Maharaja's rule.

The old system of governance had to give way to the new era of people's democracy that India ushered in. Large number of British Indian States which had absolutely not known any political activity, nor their people had any political awakening, were bestowed upon and blessed with the fruits of democracy as part of independent and democratic Republic of India. The fate of British Indian States was, therefore, essentially linked up with the fate of India. Unless India had achieved independence, no former Indian State could dream of getting freedom, much less its people. After India had become an independent Republic, hardly any scope for the survival of the "Maharajas" and "Nawabs" was left. No question of singling out any State or any Maharaja or Nawab had to arise, neither for any discrimination or hostile treatment, nor for granting any extra ordinary concessions or "special position" or "Status". Universal application of the democratic principles and norms and agreed patterns had to be applied to each and every State that had acceded to India.

But the manner in which Maharaja Hari Singh was deposed and the autocracy in the State abolished, smacked of personal vengeance, unfairness and political short sightedness as already indicated. He and his rule was bound to go like any other Maharaja or Nawab in India. There was, however, no normal approach, free from bias, made to Kashmir and that abnormalcy in approach created abnormalcy in the whole situation which might not have been perceived by those at the helm of affairs of the country and handling the situation. In any case, the Maharaja's unceremonious deposition was not appreciable.

> *"It is said that the leaders of National Conference did not like the Maharaja. I want to ask: was the Nizam of Hyderabad liked by the people of Hyderabad? it is said that whatever Maharaja Hari Singh did in Kashmir after the partition and before the Accession, is extremely deplorable. I want to ask: whatever Nizam did through Laik Ali and Kasim Rizvi,*

was that amounting to friendship with India and opposing the communal holocaust? I want the Government of India to read its own white paper regarding Hyderabad and say whether Hari Singh was bad or Nizam of Hyderabad was bad? Inspite of this what has been done is that Nizam is the ":Raj Pramukh" and draws rupees one crore annually as salary. Maharaja Hari Singh is leading last days of his life in exile in Bombay. I want to ask: Why this discrimination? Was it the fault of Maharaja Hari Singh that he declared Kashmir's Accession to India? Without his declaration of Accession, we have no basis even today to treat Kashmir as a part of India.......Like other big Indian Rajas, the Maharaja of Kashmir could have also been made a constitutional ruler. His presence would have been a guarantee for Kashmir's integration and unity. This guarantee has been abolished now and Kashmir has been led on the path of conflict and confusion".[34]

Obviously, therefore, the end of autocracy was not brought about in simple and honest manner. It was more prompted by the sense of vengeance than the liking for a truly democratic system of governance. National Conference had always been referring to the "Maharaja's rule" as "Dogra rule". Its tone and the manner was likely to create a bad impression about the Dogras as a community. It, therefore, helped to drive a wedge between the Dogras and National Conferenc, though Dogras were as good subjects of Maharaja as the Kashmiri's were.

An examination paper on English subject set by Kashmir university for F.A candidates in 1952 would reveal feeling of abhorrence, of which an exception was taken by some people. In this examination paper an Urdu passage was required to be translated into English by the candidates. According to them, it referred to the anti Dogra feeling and not to anti Maharaja rule. A newspaper while commenting on it, quoted the passage from the examination paper, which in fact was a statement made by G.M. Sadiq in pre-independence period:

"People of Kashmir are determined to finish Dogra rule. All the endeavours of Kashmir government to crush the freedom movement have met with failure and it has now stooped so low that it uses shameful tact ics...........under the pretext of maintaining peace, the plans are being contrived to seek justification for brutality of "Dogra army"

".......I want to ask politely as to why this expression of shuddering from the "Dogra Raj" and "Dogra Fouj" now?........Dogras are important component of people of Kashmir. Once upon a time with their strength, valour and sacrifices, they conquered for Kashmir areas of Gilgit, Ladakh and Askardoo. About those unparalleled conquests, the leaders of Kashmir may not perhaps like today to speak about,. But why

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[34] *Excerpt from editorial of the Urdu Daily Milap, New Delhi, April 1st, 1952.*

do they forget that the Dogras are even today an important constituent of Kashmir population. They also have a heart that throbs and have emotions. Instead of calling the Government of Maharaja Hari Singh as a Dogra Government, it could be referred to as "Autocratic rule" in the excerpt under reference. And instead of brutality of "Dogra Fouj" the words "Sarkari Fouj" could also be substituted for the former. But it has not been done.......After all Dogra boys would also have appeared in the examination. On reading these words attributed to Dogras what impression they might have imbibed about Dogras. And how much hatred and spite would develop about the Dogras in the mind of non-Dogra students. I do not agree with the various aspects of the policy pursued by Kashmir Government".[35]

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[35] *Editorial of the daily Milap, April 12, 1952.*

CHAPTER - VI

Devolution of the power and after

People of the State saw the exit of Maharaja Hari Singh and end of the autocracy in a somewhat dramatic manner. Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and his party gained absolute power; but it was not through their struggle or because of any long fought battle. It was devolution of the power on the Sheikh and his National Conference by the Government of India. Thrusting of the power on the captive who could not seek his release even by tendering an apology to the ruler, whose deposition later on was caused by the Government of India, could not be unexpected. The efforts made and movements launched to seize and snatch the power did not, however, yield any dividends. The events and circumstances had conspired against National Conference and its leadership and they relegated to background, watching the situation as helpless spectators and bewailing over the circumstances beyond their control. The achievements, ascribed wrongly to the result of the struggle, were not as laudable as the struggle itself was. But the success conferred on the Sheikh and his National Conference was marvellous.

The power was not, therefore, seized or snatched by them of their own, but it came to them consequent upon exercise of supreme and sovereign authority by the Central Government preceded by political machinations and pressure tactics that Maharaja Hari Singh was subjected to. The people of the State were never educated in this regard nor were ever told frankly that the power was devolved upon them by the Government of India and was not, as the leaders misguided them,"found" at Lal Chowk, Srinagar. This is as true as Pakistan failed to hoist her flag at Lal Chowk even after knocking at the door steps of Srinagar. They in fact wanted to conceal these and similar facts deliberately and gave out a different version, taking exclusive credit to themselves; eulogizing the freedom struggle and declaring the alleged seizure of the state power as a consequence of that struggle. Kashmiris were never told and explained the magnanimity of India and the role she played in ousting the Maharaja and bestowing power to them through National Conference. As against it, veiled preachings were made against India for selfish ends of the leaders. True, the glory of the past struggle could not be brushed aside altogether, but its value was only that of a decorative work. Ornaments may add to the glamour of a bride, but the ornaments itself is not the bride.

Kashmiri leaders always acted and acted purposely on wrong and incorrect premises, which sought to underestimate the role played by Prime Minister Nehru in particular and the Government of India in general, in liquidating the autocracy in the State and devolving absolute power to the people. Admission of this fact by the people of Kashmir and their leaders could certainly be underlined by a sense of moral obligation to cement the bonds of unity in turn, and to work for emotional integration with India. It would have left hardly any room or option to think or act in the manner that might weaken this link and alienate the people from the political mainstream of the country. For, doing so would work against the interests of Kashmiri and could not push them back to the state of subjugation as their leaders exploited. The devolution of power sent waves of ecstasy to those connected with National Conference. It stimulated them to fight against Pakistani invaders as they boasted upon the link forged with rest of the country. Emergency Officers associated with National Conference, were appointed for various districts and also other host of officers were recruited to gear up the administrative machinery. The sharing of power even on unofficial level, permeated the branches of organisation.

Mohamed Maqbool Sherwani among other civilians, earned the distinction not only by helping the Indian army and guiding them to fight the invaders, but also by laying down his life for the cause of India. He had waylaid the Pakistani invaders and on coming to know about the deception played by him, Sherwani was much sought after by the invaders who later captured him. He refused to say "Pakistan Zindabad" and he instead raised the slogans of "Hindustan Zindabad" and "Sher-i-Kashmir Zindabad". Sherwani was brutally killed by the Pakistan intruders. They tied him to an electric wooden pole, nailed his head and crucified him. He was tortured, then fired and killed. Many Kashmiris and their top leaders might have met the same fate, even worst, had not the Patiala troops reached Kashmir in time.[36]

Master Abdul Aziz, another martyr, was already killed by Pakistanis in Muzaffarabad area (now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) for upholding the banner of communal harmony and opposing violence that was unleashed by Pakistan against the State.As a result of this, about sixty thousand Hindus and Sikhs were killed in the State by Pakistan and their supporters and lakhs of them had to flee to safety to other parts of the State,leaving their homes and hearths in Pakistan occupied areas. A large number of women and others were kidnaped, retained and converted to Islam. As already mentioned Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference was popular in the Valley of Kashmir. It had, however, no foothold worth the name in the two regions of Jammu & Ladakh of this three tier State.These two regions cover a very large area of the State as compared to the Valley. The Sheikh and his National Conference was unknown to Ladakh region: Even then Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his National Conference was invested with the power and authority over the entire State by the Government of India, as

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[36] The Indian Government did not send initially its own army, that had fallen to the share of India out of the division of British Indian Army at the time of split of the country. Patiala was a princely State which had acceded to India and later on merged with India. It was the army of this Patiala State and not the former British Indian Army ,which faced the marauding Pakistani armed tribesmen and which had become independent on August 15, 1947, till this army merged with Indian Forces later.

they wished it.

At the out set, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was appointed by the Maharaja as Head of the Administration in the State. It did not work well as it created dyarchy in the state administration, causing chaos and confusion. Sheikh Abdullah instead of helping the administration, created acute crisis. He flagrantly defied the orders of the Prime Minister,Mehar Chand Mahajan and of other competent authorities of the State, and instead, issued his own orders in contravention to theirs. He also instructed the concerned authorities not to comply with their orders as against his own. The concerned executing machinery of the Government was at a loss to make out as to whose orders and which of the orders, were to be executed and complied with. Under the set up that was functioning in the State, the Prime Minister was the highest authority under the Maharaja. But Head of the administration was temporarily created a special office for Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and he would see that only his orders were carried out and not those of the Prime Minister and other authorities. He even used to threaten the officers to sack them in case they did not comply with his orders in preference to the orders passed by the Prime Minister.

The fountain of law and justice as well as the Constitutional authority was the Maharaja . The Sheikh was aware of his backing from the Government of India and on that strength he would defy any order and authority. If Maharaja was the source of law and authority, India was having total sovereignty which was at the back of the Sheikh. Every authority, therefore, paled into insignificance before the Sheikh and he gained a commanding position not only in the Valley of Kashmir, but in the whole State of Jammu & Kashmir. The Sheikh was using his position and authority for looking after and upholding the Muslim interests only, at times scuttling the other important matters, thus creating a conflicting situation with the Prime Minister.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah complained to Union Government against the Prime Minister and desired his ouster. For avoiding any conflicting situation to arise, he wanted the Prime Ministership of the State for himself. In order to appease Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah in particular and the Kashmir Muslims in general, the Central Government as usual, interfered again and prevailed upon Mehar Chand Mahajan [37] to give up the office of State's Prime Ministership much before expiry of his contractual period. In lieu of this, he was assured to be suitably accommodated. He agreed to and did vacate his office as he was under pressure. Ram Lal Batra was holding office of Dy. Prime Minister of the State, but he could not be elevated to the office of Prime Minister as the Sheikh was to be appointed on this high office. The Maharaja was, however, again pressurised to appoint Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah as Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State.

37. Mehar Chand Mahajan, after giving up office of Prime Minister of the Jammu & Kashmir State ,was elevated by the Central Government to the Bench of Supreme Court. He retired as Chief Justice of India.

The Maharaja gave in, before the sovereign power of the country and appointed the Sheikh as Prime Minister. Then the liquidation of autocracy and ouster of Maharaja Hari Singh was mooted and given effect to. No public opinion in the State was sought and ascertained in this regard. These were the despotic decisions taken stealthily by the sovereign country of India at the behest of Sheikh Abdullah, with regard to the persons and institutions within this part of the country, ostensibly, in her interests, but in reality, in the interests of the Sheikh and his party. The prime mover for this extraordinary constitutional action, was the Sheikh himself in collaboration with the Central Government and not the public in general. Judging in the backdrop of these historical developments, a precedent of thrusting upon, men and matters by the Central Government from above as caused by the local leaders and clothing them with the absolute power and authority, has been set from the very beginning. And Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference were consenting parties to all these abnormal actions and situations. They set this tradition in Kashmir and they should be regarded as trend setters as they were sponsors and originators of this trend. No growth, consent or approval from below was deemed necessary in seizing, wielding and holding the power. The right of the people to choose their own government and the rulers was also dispensed with thereby, and the democratic process scuttled.

When it could be done in the case of one, it could be applied in the case of another and no objection could be raised to it on the basis of principle established and followed. The power, therefore, did not flow from the grassroots, nor the Maharaja's deposition emanated therefrom, but flashed from the Central Government by way of decisions initiated and imposed from above. The people of the State, consciously or unconsciously, accepted this line of action and the principle evolved, hailed it and acted it upon. Consequently they shared the power in whatever shape and form, they partook in the precedents set as aforesaid and derived benefits therefrom. Such precedents were apt to recur as the tradition was created for the future. These measures treated as stop gap arrangements to meet the exigencies during the period of transition, could not render any "justification" for commission of these despotic acts, if the healthy democratic traditions were to take roots in the State. The question is whether the democratic norms were followed or not and whether any reference to the people on vital issues like the appointment of Head of the Administration and then the Prime Minister as also deposition of the Maharaja was made or not and whether any valid procedure, was adopted and due process initiated for bringing about these fundamental changes, affecting not only the Valley but all the three distinctive geographical, cultural and ethnic units and groups of the State? If the reply is in negative, which undoubtedly is, then everything and every action shall be deemed to have been undemocratic and dictatorial which in fact it was. Accordingly, therefore, no plausible explanation or justification can be tendered therefor.

Constituent Assembly was convened in 1951 to enact and adopt Constitution for the State of Jammu & Kashmir. This Constitution was framed, adopted and given to the people of the State in 1956. It left no scope for the institution of Maharaja and for the Autocracy. But what about the period till 1956? Maharaja Hari Singh was denuded of all powers and authority in 1949, though process for it had started right from 1947 itself. No opinion poll or referendum was held before and for appointment of the Sheikh as Prime Minister or for deposition of the Maharaja. This smacked of arbitrariness and touched vanity of the Dogras and also Muslim political adversaries of Sheikh Abdullah, who regarded it as a discriminatory step against them. They resented installing of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah over their head first as the Head of the Administration and then as the Prime Minister of the State. This development was not welcomed by them. Jammu took it as step motherly treatment and also for not treating them as equal partners. They felt that they were made subservient to Kashmir which had started to regard Jammu under their thumb. What the fate of Maharaja Hari Singh was in the days gone by, it could have been the fate of Sheikh Abdullah in the days that ensued and of any other personage thereafter.

After seizing the power by National Conference, Muslim Conference became for some period completely defunct. Some of its hardcore pro Pakistan members and sympathisers whisked away to Pakistan. Many Hindus in Kashmir also started the process of sneaking to Delhi and other parts of the country, with the purpose of seeking better job prospects for themselves and for their progeny. The main underlying idea in this gradual exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, nevertheless, was to flee to safer places Tej Bahadur Sapru [38] wanted to evacuate all Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir Valley and settle them collectively in some suitable area of the country. Ailing, Sapru as he then was, had embarked upon this ambitious plan with his full resources. Sheikh Abdullah made them to stay back through the intervention of Jawaharlal Nehru on the ground that his administration would suffer badly, if the Kashmiri Pandits left Kashmir.

Thinking community politics had no relevance after 1947 and with the advent of National Conference Government, Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha (All State Kashmiri Pandits Conference as it later came to be called) held a convention of the community members in Srinagar in 1950 and passed a resolution under the chairmanship of its leader, Sheo Narayan Fotedar, eschewing politics and aligning politically with National Conference. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru while acknowledging the receipt of the resolution, expressed satisfaction over it and lauded the decision in a communication addressed to the Secretary of the Sabha,

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38. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a great scholar, leader and a renowned constitutional lawyer, was a Kashmiri Pandit settled at Allahabad. He was also law member in the Viceroy's Council and passed away some time after partition of the country. His ancestors had migrated from Kashmir.

Prof. Lakshmi Narayan Dhar.

With National Conference coming to power, political vacuum occurred in the opposition in Kashmir. The transfer of power to the Sheikh and his party was a major event of singluar character in the history of Kashmir which had taken place in abnormal conditions with abnormal type of shift in power. The Sheikh and his party also acted in an abnormal and despotic manner. Apart from a number of Muslims, a group had long before emerged among the intellectual Kashmiri Pandits holding divergent views on the question of Kashmir's Accession. They all, however, had opposed the "Quit Kashmir" movement of Sheikh Abdullah and were made first targets of wrath of the despotic rulers who came to wield the power on end of autocracy. They either escaped imprisonment by fleeing the State of Jammu & Kashmir or found themselves behind the bars in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah silenced their voice of dissent. Some of them were holding the view that Kashmir should accede to Pakistan as it had overwhelming Muslim population and also had contiguity with Pakistan and rail and road routes no longer existed, which had previously connected it with India. They were of the opinion that Kashmir would be benefited by this Accession. The persons who advocated this view and suffered for it, included Prem Nath Bazaz, Rugh Nath Vaishnavi, Jagar Nath Sathu, Kanhaya Lal Koul, Shyam Lal Yechiya and Pitamber Nath Dhar "Fani." Prem Nath Kannaw was also arrested and detained in prison on a different reason, i.e, having opposed Sheikh Abdullah during his "Quit Kashmir movement."[39]

The propounder of theory of "Independent Kashmir" was Ram Chandra Kak, the Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir. His considered view was that Kashmir had its own identity and entity. The people would lose that in case they acceded to either of the dominion, India or Pakistan. By remaining independent, they would not only gain respect and better position but will also serve as a bridge between India and Pakistan. He wanted to maintain good neighbourly relations with both the countries.

After assuming power, National Conference, however, regarded Ram Chandra Kak as an arch enemy. They meted out shabby treatment to him and subjected him to humiliation of worst type. He was arrested in connection with false cases fabricated against him to avenge him. He was detained in Police Station Kothibagh Srinagar in a deplorable condition. Next day he was brought to the Court on foot to produce him before a Magistrate for obtaining the remand. He was hand cuffed, not with an iron chain but a rope woven of grass. It was to add insult to injury. His crime was that he had quelled Quit Kashmir movement and adhered to his theory of "Independent Kashmir", which was not acceptable to the Sheikh then as it was

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[39]. Prem Nath Kannaw was Chief Editor Daily Martand Srinagar-an official organ of Sanatam Dharm Yuvak Sabha (All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference) till 1947. After his release, he went to Delhi and was on the editorial staff of Daily Milap, New Delhi, where he passed away long back,

propounded by him. Sheikh did not like to recede to the background. While walking towards the Court, a large number of National Conference workers including children, gheraoed Kak in a procession walking with him upto the Court, harassing him, calling him names and spitting. He was looking aghast, walking unprotected, not cared for even by the policemen accompanying him.

He suffered for his views and conviction. But did the Sheikh and his National Conference cling to their conviction and suffer therefor? Did they discard the theory of "Independent Kashmir" and rightly penalised Ram Chandra Kak for holding those views? Or did the Sheikh exhibit his capricious and whimsical political convictions and demonstrated his political inconsistency putting people to shame, damaging them and even getting them killed? Did the Governments both, Central and State treat Sheikh Abdullah in the same manner that they treated Kak, after the Sheikh was deposed in 1953? It was not so. He and his people were like royal guests in the prisons. Why these discriminations and differences in approaches and attitudes? Why was all this allowed to perpetuate? In the succeeding pages, this position will be examined. It is, however, obviously clear that Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah fought against Pakistan and also against the idea of "Independent Kashmir". That is why he penalised all those pleading for these views. But was it so really and had he any political consistency? Or was he doing it under any political exigency and pursuing it as a political strategy?

The Sheikh did not tolerate even a mild but genuine criticism or a soft word of dissent. He stopped publication of a nationalist newspaper the *"Vakil"*, Srinagar in 1948, after he had come to power. This paper was pro-India and not anti-government. The fault of the paper was that it dared to unfold the sufferings of a section of the people and pointed out their hardships, which required assuaging touch by the Government. Its founder editor, Shambhu Nath Kaul addressed an open letter to the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, expressing grievance about the unfair treatment meted out by his Government to the Press and enquired what his crime was? He lastly stated the following in his letter :

> *"Is gunah per mujhay mara kih ghunaghar na tha"*.
> *(Sinlessness was my sin that I was punished for)* [40]

Election of the members to the State Constituent Assembly was held in early 1951. The atmosphere was so surcharged with horror and terror that hardly anybody could dare to come forward to file his nomination paper. To fight the election actually was something near impossible. National Conference and its leadership had gone amuck due to the power intoxication. Mohamed Umar Bhat, a nationalist leader was perhaps the only person who dared to go to the office of the Returning Officer of his Constituency in Srinagar to file his nomination paper. He was

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[40] This open letter was published in September in the Daily Martand, Srinagar.

harassed, abused and manhandled by the National Conference workers and was not allowed to file the nomination paper.[41] This was the policy of the ruling party not to allow any contest. Consequently all members to the Constituent Assembly were declared elected unopposed in the State. Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference boasted of this "popularity" and the type of Government that he provided to his people. This is what they were fighting for and the type of civil rights and liberties that they longed to achieve. What these precedents and dictatorial conventions Sheikh Abdullah set for the people? This all was done with oblique motives.

The Sheikh found somewhat stiff attitude of Ghulam Mohi-ud-Karra[42] which was not tolerated by him. He made Karra's existence in the party impossible and he was thrown out and discarded. It appeared that Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his other colleagues of National Conference were inclined to give despotic rule to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and that they were not fairly disposed and mentally prepared to really establish and strengthen democracy and democratic institution in the State. The people's struggle that they had launched, boiled down ultimately to the regimentation in the politics and perpetuation of the personal rule. Under the garb of slogans for more and more rights to the people, they in fact wanted to have all the rights and absolute power for themselves alone and not for the people. In the name of people, they wanted to have everything appropriated under the sky. People without rights, were always exploited, sometimes in the name of religion and region and other times in the name of ethnic affinity. They openly and stoutly defied and denounced the spirit of "Naya Kashmir" and distorted the nationalist content of the Preamble it had contained, not long after its ink had dried up. Were the people of Kashmir really struggling for all this? Was it in any manner substitute even for "Responsible Government"? Did it in any case, give them more than what the Maharja had given them? The people seemed to have no inclination to ponder over these questions. They perhaps derived satisfaction from liquidation of autocracy and rested content with the accessibility to the authorities in the degenerating and corrupt administrative set up, that came into being under the stewardship of those power wielding leaders.

41. During "Quit Kashmir" movement in 1946, Late Kh. Mohamed Umar Bhat was suffering detention as National Conference activist, when his young and the only son Kh. Ghulam Mohamed Bhat received bullet injury in Police firing in Srinagar. Late Bhat Sahib joined Socialist movement later and was the first State Secretary of Praja Socialist Party in 1954. His son survived and runs a newspaper in Srinagar.

42. Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Karra was President of National Conference District Committee Srinagar and was appointed as Emergency officer in 1947 when power was being transferred to National Conference : Sheikh Abdullah did not like his emergence as a young popular leader and was cut to size by throwing him out of the Party.

CHAPTER- VII

Jammu upheaval against limited accession and discrimination

Dismayed over the despotic behaviour and arbitrary functioning of the Government, the people in the Jammu region, by and large, did not reconcile with the situation. They were sore over the manner Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference was thrust to rule upon them and the reservations observed in the full and complete accession and integration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with India. The way Maharaja Hari Singh was deposed, also itched them. They thought that their patriotic feelings and urges were hurt and shattered. In the name of India, they were ruled and in the name of India, they were also subdued, a strange irony of fate. After accession to India, why should there be a separate flag, a separate Constitution and a separate President for the State, they challenged? This pervading resentment had given birth to Jammu and Kashmir Praja Parishad, an organisation to protect the interests of Jammu as also to safeguard the national interests. In order to foil any moves, machinations and policies, aiming at disparaging the position of Jammu and thwarting the emotional integration with India, Praja Parishad launched agitation which remained confined to the Jammu region as the agitations of national Conference had remained confined to the Valley. Touching the regional susceptibilities of the Jammu people, they welcomed and supported Praja Parishad. Their movement for assertion of the claims of Jammu and for seeking State's full, final and irrevocable accession to India, gained momentum and Praja Parishad became a force to reckon with. It was headed by Prem Nath Dogra, an Ex Waziri-Wazarat, simple in nature and honest in conviction.The Jammu movement unlike that of Kashmir was not for quest of "identity of Jammu." It was for its total merger with India.

Among the various important slogans raised by Praja Parishad, around which the people rallied and became the focus point for the movement, were : "Aik Nishan, aik Vidhan, aik Pradhan" (One flag, one Constitution, one President). It, therefore, became clear on behalf of Jammu people that they wanted full and complete merger with India and opposed separate Constitution, separate flag and Sadri – Riyast (now is Governor) for the State. The agitations launched in this connection aimed at seeking enforcement of their demands for the entire State of Jammu & Kashmir in the same manner as the agitations of National Conference for fullfilment of their demands were meant for the entire State. Praja Parished had no foot hold in the Valley, but it never excluded the Valley of Kashmir from its charter of demands. This movement was in furtherance of national interests and not against the interests of the country. Even then these supreme interests were subordinated to the whims of a section of the Kashmiri people!

The State Government was bent upon to crush the movement with a heavy hand. The Government of India had all the abhorrence for Praja Parishad and its movement. They regarded Jammu agitation as based on communal considerations which they apprehended, would instil and inculcate communal feelings in Jammu people on the one hand, and on the other, it might evoke adverse reaction from the Muslims in Kashmir. It was to weaken the link of Kashmir with rest of the country, they inferred. In fact, this type of inference and thinking in itself was based on communal considerations and was not consistent with patriotic urges. Praja Parishad explained the difference between it and National Conference in the following words :

> *"The main difference between the Praja Parishad and the National Conference is that while the former stands for the full and unconditional accession of the State to India, the latter wants only a conditional and limited accession Praja Parishad wants the Indian Constitution to apply to Jammu & Kashmir in its entirety, the President of Indian Republic to be the President of the State as it is in all other acceding States".* [43]

Praja Parishad submitted a memorandum to the Rastrapati on June 19, 1952 and stressed the need for firm and final accession of the State to India. The memorandum also contained the grievances of misconstruing the co-operation extended by Jammu people in this behalf and the discriminatory attitude adopted by the Sheikh Government. The memorandum says:

> *"The future of the Jammu and Kashmir State particularly its relationship with India is a matter of vital and paramount interest to the people of the State. The people of Jammu are particularly anxious to ensure that their State becomes firmly and finally a permanent unit of the Indian Union and are prepared to pay any price for it.*
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> *It was this anxiety to be one with the rest of India that induced the people of Jammu to offer their fullest co-operation to the Kashmir National Conference when powers of day to day were transferred to it by the Maharaja at the behest of Government of India,. This was done in the hope that the leaders of the National Conference would overcome their past prejudices against the Dogras of Jammu and carry the whole people of the State with them to achieve the common goal of full accession to India. But unfortunately, Sheikh Abdullah's Government not only failed to appreciate this co-operative spirit but even mistook it for a sign of weakness and adopted a policy of systematic and deliberate discrimination and repression against the people of Jammu province generally and their representative body, the Praja Parishad particularly. This repressive and dis-*

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[43] *A plea to understand Praja Parishad. It is a brochure published by Praja Parishad.*

> *criminatory policy extends to all spheres of political, economic and cultural life of the people and even amounts to interfering in their religious life*".

The memorandum also highlighted the grievance about relegation of Hindi into the background and preparation of text books in an arbitrary manner. The memorandum further adds:

> " *In the educational sphere systematic effort has been made during all these years to break the linguistic and cultural ties that bind the State with the rest of India. Hindi occupied an equal place with Urdu in the educational life of the State before accession. Now it has been completely relegated to the background. Urdu has been made the official language of the State and the medium of instruction in the Schools. Even the Text Books meant for girls are full of difficult Persian and Arabic words which even the teachers do not understand. Urdu has been made a compulsory subject for the Matriculation Examination. A sense of Kashmiri Nationalism, as distinct from Indian nationalism, is sought to be created through the books prescribed for the School going children.*
>
> *Among the seven men who constitute Text Book Committee of the State, there is not a single person belonging to Jammu or to the minority community*".

The movement of Praja Parishad was ruthlessly dealt with by the Kashmir Government. Dozens were killed and hundreds were injured and thousands were arrested. But none of their demands were acceded to, by the State Government. The Central Government, however, did not play a fair role. They did not intervene and interfere to check the reign of terror and repression let loose on the people of Jammu. Unlike Kashmir, no Nehrus came forward to show their sympathies and to involve themselves with this people's war. The persons like Mookerjis and Banerjis were, however, there to champion the real cause of the State, particularly of Jammu. The government stooped so low as to proscribe even a brochure "Bharat kay Vidhan say Chird Kiyon" (why aversion to Indian Constitution) published by Praja Parishad. It was neither against India nor against the State but did not suit the interests of Muslim fundamentalists in Kashmir. It was a cry for merger with India to enjoy the fruits of Indian democracy and rights granted thereunder to an Indian citizen. The police lathi charges, firings, killings, occasional imposition of curfew and arrests becamea regular feature in Jammu, after the State had acceded to India and the Sheikh had come to power. The impact of agitation was, by and large, over whole of the Jammu region. Students and the youth suffered the most and even their educational career received a tremendous set back. The Principal Government Gandhi Memorial College Jammu, made mention of some facts in a report to the Government, dated February 7, 1952, about the student disturbance that started on hoisting of State flag alongwith the flag of the country. Jammu people did not tolerate any tendency that went counter to their concept of oneness with rest of the country. The report, inter alia said:

> *"When the government moved down to Jammu during this winter, the department laid down a programme of physical displays and athletic meets for the students of Jammu province, and organised the first physical display in the Government Gandhi Memorial College grounds on the 15th of January. Students of government college demonstrated against the hoisting of the "Halwala Jhanda" (the flag with the plough)[44] along side the Indian Union flag".*

After narrating details about the disciplinary action taken against the students, their ultimatum and hunger strike and series of negotiations with them, the Principal finally writes in his report:

> *"I am convinced that these students are determined to create mischief and disturbance. They have, therefore, left me no alternative but to recommend that the college be closed indefinitely till such time as better counsels prevail with these students".[45]*

No former princely Indian State which acceded to India, was allowed to retain and hoist the State flag after accession. While making a statement on Kashmir, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru referred to flag controversy. He said on June 25, 1952 in Parliament:

> *"...........There was no doubt that in any part of India it was the flag of India that must be dominant. It should be remembered that in some States till recently there was also a State flag and in Mysore four or five days ago every public building flew not only the National Flag but the Maharaja's flag which had been adopted as the State flag. With the concurrence of the Maharaja of Mysore, it was decided not to display the State flag".[46]*

Kashmir flag was not even the Maharaja's flag or his State flag. The State flag now made was orginally flag of the National Conference. This flag was adopted as the State flag by National Conference Government with certain modifications after transfer of power. The objection of Jammu and Ladakh to this flag was, therefore, tenable on the basis of logic and psychology.

The rigour and intensity of Praja Parishad movement was deep and grave. People's involvement in the movement was in great degree. The Government applied all the force and adopted all the methods to quell the agitation. The State

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[44] "Halwala Jhanda" is the flag of National Conference which has been adopted with certain modifications as the flag for Jammu and Kashmir state.

[45] Report of the Principal Government Gandhi Memorial College Jammu, dated 7th February, 1952, submitted by him to the Government on student disturbances.

[46] The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, June 27, 1952.

Government Press Note dated February 8, 1952, inter alia, says :

> *"The mob refused to heed this warning. The women accompanying the mob were at the head of the procession and it was extremely difficult for the police to disperse it. However, a party of Police by-passed the group of women segregating them to one side. This party then used a mild lathi-charge to disperse it. This action was taken after hundreds of stones and brick-bats had been showered on the Police and Magistrates on duty from the adjoining house-tops which caused injuries to several members of the Police,. As a result of this lathicharge the mob was dispersed but stones and bricks continued to be flown on the Police from the adjacent galleys. Meanwhile, another mob collected behind the Police at Panj Tirthi chowk and they clearly wanted to encircle the Police and the Magistrates. This situation was extremely critical and in consequence the District Magistrate at this stage asked for help from the Army"*

For the personal ends of the rulers, the Government did not recognise Praja Parishad which had come up as a representative party of Jammu region as against National Conference. The Government version of the situation itself makes it clear impliedly though, as indicated above, that the people of Jammu were not with the National Conference or its Government. Nor they subscribed to the policy of allowing semi-autonomous Status for the State. They were not, therefore, prepared to accept overlordship of National Conference and its Government which had been thrust upon them. The resentment of the people was bound to escalate. The Press Note issued by the State Government on 9th February, 1952, says:

> *"Seventy-two hour curfew was imposed from midnight yesterday within the Municipal limits of Jammu city by order of the District Magistrate. Arrests made include some office-bearers of the Praja Parishad, who were implicated in yesterday's happenings. Situation is calm and police is patrolling main thoroughfares and army pickets are guarding essential and strategic points".*

The advocacy for more autonomy by National Conference leaders and their Government and for separation from the national mainstream, irritated and frowned the Praja Parishad more and more. Praja Parishad says:

> *"The Revenue Minister Mirza Mohamed Afzal Baig has made no secret of his intentions while speaking on March 24, 1952. He wants to remain within Indian Union only to the extent that India safeguards Kashmir, constructs roads for them and spends on their external matters. But so far as internal matters are concerned, India will have the same position which the other countries may have. This is a strange position that representatives of Kashmir sit in Indian Parliament and interfere in our internal matters but Indian representatives cannot do anything to counter it. It*

> *creates suspicion in the mind of every Indian patriot. Even the friends of Sheikh Sahib also objected to it which he felt offended for, and did not countenance their honest opinion and correct criticism either. He revealed his mind in three or four speeches that he delivered.*
> *The point of view of Praja Parishad has been known to the public by its President Pandit Prem Nath Dogra. He is prepared to wind up Praja Parishad provided Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah decides to apply Constitution of India to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But his dreams of 20 years will fall through if that Constitution is made applicable to Kashmir. He is, therefore, creating obstacles in the way of India. Application of Indian Constitution will end all his arbitrary actions, for which 40 lakh people of the State solicitude".*[47]

The whole weight was applied and full strength utilized by National Conference leadership to seek a unique position for the State and to carve out an independent Republic of Jammu and Kashmir within the Republic of India. It was not so easy for the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, to dissuade the Sheikh from translating into action his latent desire of semi Independent Kashmir which could be later a step towards full-fledged "Independent Kashmir". Nehru was shy to oppose it, as his political fondlings and caresses had spoiled Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and he had given him all latitude. National Conference was, therefore, pursuing its deprecatory designs, unmindful of reaction emanating from Jammu and Ladakh. The Chairman of Committee on fundamental rights, Mirza Afzal Baig while speaking in Kashmir constituent Assembly, announced:

> *"Kashmir will be an independent republic within the Union of India...........There will be one President in the Republic of Kashmir and National Assembly, as also a separate judiciary. General level of administration will be raised....... The framing of Constitution is a complicated matter. It requires sufficient time to go into it. The question of utmost importance for consideration is as to what relationship we have to keep with the Centre".*[48]

Apart from fundamental issue, the people of Jammu and Ladakh felt that the National Conference Government had otherwise also perpetrated injustice on and perpetuated discrimination against them. In order to cover up the Government's high-handedness and to close its mouth, the existence and movement of Praja Parishad was dubbed as communal by National Conference and its government. But the fact remained that the people had grievances.[49]

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[47] *"Independent Republic of Kashmir" published in Urdu in 1952 by Publicity Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Praja Parished, Jammu.*

[48] *Daily "Tej" Urdu Delhi 27th, March, 1952*

> *"We feel with honesty that the leadership of National Conference has done injustice to Jammu. The National Conference activists in Jammu may not perhaps like to point it out to Sheikh Sahib for fear of his being displeased. But we have in our office, documentary proofs of these National Conference activists, as a result of which we have off and on been advising Sheikh Sahib to pay his attention in making "Naya Jammu" like "Naya Kashmir". The National Conference Newspapers themselves also are expressing that the genuine grievances of Jammu are being overlooked and ignored and popular programme of National Conference is not being acted upon.*
>
> *...........To do away with the influence of Praja Parishad, it is not proper for the Government to stifle the throat of every dissenting voice. Every person who disagrees with the Government is put to disrepute and labeled as "conspirator", "enemy of Kashmir" and "communalist" .... The National Conference leaders must concede the right of democracy to the people so that they are able to put forth their grievances with honesty. It will benefit the Kashmir leaders and they will become popular among the people. By depriving anybodyfrom his democratic right they will increase the number of their opponents and will be loosing the sympathy of their friends".*[50]

The Head Lama of Ladakh, Kaushak Bakula, while speaking in the Constituent Assembly, levelled allegation of discrimination perpetuated by the Government. He pleaded for full integration of Ladakh with India or else stressed for grant of complete autonomy to Ladakh. He went a step further and demanded that in case their grievances were not met and removed, Ladakh be allowed to merge with Tibet. Being a National Conference member, the Head Lama mustered all his courage to make the view point of Ladakh clear at various occasions. It became difficult for National Conference leadership to dub him as a communalist.

> *"He (Head Lama) complained that Ladakh does not figure in any developmental schemes. No steps have been taken so far even for rehabilitation of its refugees who are helplessly running from pillar to post in Himachal Pradesh. Ladakh's complaint is similar to that of Jammu. By calling every one communalist and belonging to Praja Parishad, the matter may be deferred for some time but they cannot be throttled up for all times to*

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49. In fifties and onwards Socialists like Mr. Om Prakash Saraf and Mr. Balraj Puri of Jammu tried to introduce an element of moderation in Jammu politics and to strike a balance in politics of the two regions

50. Urdu Daily "Tej", 6th May, 1952.

> *come..... Those who clamour and raise the voice of dissent and truth, are labeled as the persons breeding up communalism. Is it not a fact that Ladakh and Jammu have practically been ignored in developmental schemes? Is it not a fact that the government is avoiding the responsibility of rehabilitating thousands of refugees of the State in the State and these people are going from one place to another in India in a bad condition? Is it not a fact that in Jammu and Kashmir itself hundreds of houses are lying vacant, but these people are not settled in these houses?"* [51]

The functioning of the National Conference government was not in line with the democratic principles and doctrine of equality and fairness. Jammu was ruled in a manner as if it were the appendage of Kashmir Valley. Nevertheless discontent in Jammu persisted and was even accepted by some National Conference leaders. A National Conference leader of the time, says:

> *"There is, no doubt, wide spread dissatisfaction and feeling among the people of Jammu that they are being discriminated against and neglected. To an extent this feeling might have been generated because of the political importance given to Kashmir. But it is also a fact that authorities have not been responsive to public opinion in Jammu. " In my opinion, the trouble lies in the non-recognition of Jammu as an entity. It is obvious that the recognition of Jammu as a separate political and constitutional entity would not find favour with those who count".* [52]

No serious effort was ever made by Kashmir to have the relations normalised with Jammu on the basis of understanding and equality. The Praja Parishad declared deposition of Sheikh Abdullah in August, 1953 as vindication of its stand. President of Praja Parishad, Prem Nath Dogra, recounting the repression of the Government let loose on the people who ran the agitation continuously for long, said in his Presidential address, on September 6, 1953:

> *"During those eight months terrible engines of suppression were let loose against us by the government of Kashmir with the help of government of India. Not only the courage, forbearance; restraint in the face of gravest provocations and above all faith in the justness of our cause shown by the people of Jammu, proved too much for the might of both the governments. These bullets, lathies, gas bombs as also their systematic campaign of looting, harassing, dishonouring the women in most barbaric manner and of humiliating the people in various other ways failed to dampen the spirit of our people.....more important is the question of fuller unity of our State with the rest of India. We have already made some*

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51. *Kashmir Ki Azad Republic, quoting Urdu. Daily "Tej", May 15,1952.*

52. *"Kashmir Affairs" Delhi, May, June 1961. Reference is about Mr. Mubark Shah who was a National Conference leader and had been a minister also in the State.*

> *progress towards the achievement of this goal. But much still remains to be done".*[53]

It has been seen that the political and personal considerations blurred the vision at times, of those who counted, resulting in wrong judgements and decisions. The national interests inevitably suffered therefrom. This is most dangeraous when the vital and sensitive issue like Kashmir is involved. Unless the rulers and the leaders have clear perception and vision as also clear political perspective, the upheavals of wide dimensions are bound to erupt. Accord on views based on justice, fairness, equality of outlook and conviction avert the confrontation.

In Kashmir, conflict and confusion prevailed and no unison in political thought and action was ever discerned, except that the point of focus was mosque and political creed was muslim upliftment and protection of their interests. When movements for achieving the civil rights as also the responsible government, were launched in Kashmir even under the banner of National Conference, "Dogras" were openly maligned for their rule. It was regarded as secular and progressive step. Many of the Muslim leaders even from outside the State, hailed these movements as freedom struggle of Kashmir against oppression of the Hindu Maharaja, committed on his Muslim subjects. No nationalist Muslim leader or even Nationalist Hindu leader from outside the State ever came forward to unfold the reality and expose the character and nature of the movement and the fanaticism working behind it.

In his Presidential address delivered in Jammu on September 23, 1956, Prem Nath Dogra expressed his surprise that the people of the State did not know their status even after eight years of independence. He said:

> *"Due to the wrong policies of government of India and the communal overtones of National Conference rulers and their pressure, it is not decided yet as to what will be the status of State people within India, despite lapse of eight years of India's independence. Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues took advantage of these wrong policies of government of India and had sinister plans prepared against the country. For making exposure thereof and also for forestalling such plans, the people had to undergo great sacrifices".*

Not a single author of any community and religious persuation from the above category, has cared to my knowledge, to postmortem in an unbiased manner these movements and to call a spade a spade When a Hindu or a mass of Hindus localized in a large number, constituting majority in a particular province or region like Jammu or for that matter, even Budhists in Ladakh fight for their rights and

[53] *Presidential address delivered by Pt. Prem Nath Dogra before the General Council of Praja Parishad on 6th September, 1953. Praja Parishad had since long merged in Jan Sangh and formed Bhartiya Janata Party.*

above all, for the national interests, it is termed as communal. Jammu movement was a nationalist movement, but it was dubbed otherwise? Those connected with Jammu movement, were committed Indian patriots and not people with dubious political past and doubtful loyalty. Why then Praja Parishad workers were singled out for repression? Why this double standard was used in one and the same State? The answer may give a clue to the present crisis in Kashmir. The matters have been looked through communal glasses and not in their real perspective, forgetting that the Maharaja had acceded to India. The Muslim press outside the State raised the same voice as did Sheikh Abdullah. On the problem of Kashmir, we have already quoted the opinions of some newspapers. Some Muslim newspapers including "Haqiqat, Lucknow [54] and "Al-jamiata", Delhi [55] had, however, written that Kashmir should separate from India and declare independence. It was also stressed why after all, Kashmiri's were expected to be slaves of India and reduce themselves to the State of helplessness. Newspaper "Qami Awaz" [56] , had also supported internal autonomy of Kashmir."[57]

It may, however, be clarified here, while leaders like Nehru had not come to support this people's movement in Jammu for vindication of national interests in the State, the leaders like. Dr. Shyama Prashad Mookerji did certainly come to Jammu to befriend the suffering and afflicted Indians in this State. He staked his life over Kashmir and was arrested in Jammu and detained in Srinagar. He passed away on June 23, 1953 under suspicious circumstances while suffering detention in Srinagar. He was believed to have demised for want of proper medical treatment when he was taken ill during his detention and was hospitalised in Srinagar. This has been the greatest sacrifice of a national leader of Dr. Mookerji's stature and eminence, for full, final and complete accession and integration of Jammu and Kashmir State with India. His martyrdom in Kashmir can hardly be overlooked. It shocked a section of the people there. The soil of Kashmir has not squared up the debt of his martyrdom.

The Sheikh government avoided and obstructed in settling the refugees having poured in from the other areas of the State captured by Pakistan. All such refugees are neither given proper attention nor rendered adequate help and facilities either in Jammu or elsewhere, nor have been conferred upon the refugee status. Their properties left in the areas now forming "Azad Kashmir" of Pakistan, have not

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54. The "Haqiqat" was connected with Late Mr. Rafi Ahamed Kidwai - a nationalist Muslim leader who had become Central Minister also

55. The "Aljamiata" is official organ of Jammiat-e-Ulemai Hind, which is regarded as a nationalist Muslim Party in India.

56. The "Qami-Awaz" is linked with Late Mr Jawaharlal Nehru.

57. The above press opinions are quoted from "Kashmir Ki Azad Republic." pages 16, 17, published in 1952 in Urdu by the publicity department of Jammu ~~and~~ Kashmir Praja Parishad.

been compensated for, nor any substitute relief has been granted to them by the government so far. Although Sheikh Abdullah had invited "Kazak" Muslims from the Chinese territory to settle down in Kashmir, yet his own refugees have been accorded differential treatment. A strange logic was expressed by Sheikh Abdullah on fleeing of Hindu Sikh refugees for safety to this part of the State which is quoted below, indicating the callousness of the Central government too:

> *"Sheikh Abdullah ...had only added insult to injury by telling these refugees that they (leaders in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) had been exploiting the poor people in "Azad Kashmir" and it was good that they had been thrown out from there.*
>
> *..........Even the government of India was not prepared to include refugees from "Azad Kashmir" within the category of displaced persons and treated them only as guests. The result was that they were not given any of those facilities which were available to the registered refugees from West and East Pakistan.... It is generally recognized that the rehabilitation of refugees from Azad Kashmir is linked with the solution of the Kashmir problem"* .[58]

Some Hindu Sikh refugees from Hazara and other places of West Pakistan as it was then called, had entered the Valley through Muzaffarabad, but Sheikh Abdullah did not allow them to stay there. They were sent to Jammu and are a totally neglected lot alongwith other such refugees. Their fate and the fate of their offsprings in Jammu is hanging fire even after 43 years of Indian independence. They have not been given even the basic citizenship rights and are eking out their existence as non-citizens of the State, deprived of all facilities, concessions, rights and privileges. They have no claim to education and admission in the colleges etc., as also to government employment and holding and owning property in the State. Bereft of these and other allied rights, they are aliens in their own country.

Prem Nath Dogra

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[58] Quoted from an article regarding State refugees and their Convention, published in the "Indian Express", December 20, 1953. The article has referred to the speech of a then Hindu leader of Jammu, Late Shri Kaviraj Veshno Gupt, delivered at refugee convention held at Jammu, which has been reproduced above.

CHAPTER VIII

Changing political scenario

The year 1953 was a crucial one. The Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was again vacillating. He was looking for an excuse to break the bondage and walk out of the Indian Union. He had, therefore, already embarked upon the campaign of vilification against it. He publicly expressed his doubts in some of his peeches made in 1952 about the safe future of Kashmiri Muslims in the case of perpetuating the relationship with India which he termed as a country torn with communal strife and hinted at Muslim victimisation. He would try to find faults with her. Nehru will not last for ever, he argued and asked, what would be the fate of Kashmiri Muslims in India after him. He was by and by mentally preparing people of Kashmir to raise the banner of revolt against India. This also meant a feeler to the Government of India to lay its hands off Kashmir or at any cost, concede it complete autonomy.

Sheikh Abdullah's thought process and the expression of his mind that he gave in various ways, were being keenly observed. He himself openly spoke against India and indicated his intention for formation of "Independent Kashmir" during the course of his public speech delivered at Ranbir Singhpora. He maligned India and wanted to snap the tie with her. The PTI covered his speech verbatim, which sent shock waves in political circles. Government of India was embarrassed and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had to publicly express his displeasure over his speech. *"I am not happy over this public speech"* Nehru said in a public speech and added *"I do not like the tone and the content of this speech."* [59] The volcano which erupted in 1953, had been simmering for quite some time.

Due to the Sheikh's new posture, an impression was gained by some quarters that India was losing the grip over Kashmir. It brought together some disgruntled persons to form an organisation. The Government was in doldrums and the political situation was fluid. These persons wanted to avail of the chaotic conditions and to derive some political advantage. For their political rehabilitation, raising of a political slogan having sentimental appeal to the people, at least to a vociferous section thereof, was imperatively needed, they thought. It was the month of June 1953, that Political Conference was formed with Ghulam Mohi-ud-Karra as President.[60] The main thrust of the Party was to work for Kashmir's annexation with Pakistan. In the very first public meeting held at Sehyar, Srinangar on 19th June,

[59] *The "Tej" 16th April, 1953, reproduced from Kashmir Ki Azad Republic.*

[60] *Mr. Rugh Nath Vaishnavi was its Vice President. Mr. Mohamed Shafi Quraishi, a former Union Minister and present Governor of Bihar was one of its activists. Mohiud-Din Karra is the cousin and brother-in-law of the then President Constituent Assembly Late Mr. G.M. Sadiq.*

1953, party leaders announced that Kashmir must go to Pakistan and it was what their party stood for. It was for the first time after 1947, that an open and organised voice in favour of Pakistan was raised in Kashmir which created a flutter among masses. People had on the whole seen the worst type of authoritarianism in the regime of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. They were bereft of all civil rights and liberties. This development was, therefore, both noticeable and serious. Noticeable, because masses saw in it a change in the Government's attitude of suppressing any public activity and serious, because slogans in favour of Pakistan were openly raised and the government connived at it without taking any action. The extent of the Party's success was not as much material and important as the setting up of such a party itself was.

Pakistan was still under the spell of shock for having miserably failed to annex Kashmir and on failure of Kashmiris to come out in the open in her support. Political Conference was, therefore, a bait for Pakistan. She was induced to believe that political activities in favour of Pakistan would be undertaken in Kashmir and these elements required not only moral boosting but financial aid as well. She sent huge amounts of money regularly across the border to maintain a cadre of workers in Kashmir, to canvass support in favour of Pakistan and to expand its network for anti India activities.

Political Conference, however, did not make any headway, nor could last long. It cracked up under its own weight of feuds over the share in funds coming from Pakistan. The dissatisfied workers asked for accounts of the funds received from across the border. The Party did not meet the expectations of Pakistan which checked the flow of further money into Kashmir.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was serious about achieving independence of Kashmir. His anti India utterances and activities were not without basis. American diplomats were constantly in touch with him as far back as from 1950. The U.S. Ambassador in India, Loy Henderson had a long confidential talk in 1950, with the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. The Ambassador on this basis prepared a secret report about Kashmir which the U.S. Secretary of State received as classified despatch from the U.S. Ambassador in India.

Sheikh Abdullah had shown him willingness to welcome any support for independence of Kashmir. In view of Kashmir's proximity to Soviet Union and China, the United States developed much interest in Kashmir, particularly for its strategic value and importance. Another American Ambassador in India, Adlai Stevenson, subsequently made various trips to Kashmir and picked up the threads of secret talks with Sheikh Abdullah and had several meetings with him. The talks made much headway and he played a key role in winning over Sheikh Abdullah to the side of America. Harold Stassen who also came to India thereafter, as well as Jhon Foster Dulles, U.S.A's Secretary of State showed their keen interest in

Kashmir.

> *"The American rulers, who had so far failed to establish Admiral Nimitz in Kashmir as its Administrator and bring their military forces to its soil, calculated that the new plan of "independent" Kashmir could be successfully implemented on the basis of Indo-Pakistan co-operation because it eliminated the chance of whole of the State going either to India or to Pakistan and provided for an "equitable" distribution of its territories between the two countries with the Valley brought, in effect, under imperialist rule. This was precisely what the American rulers meant by "mutually acceptable" and "amicable solution" of the Kashmir dispute. Moreover, they know that the plan of "independent" Kashmir could not be openly placed in the Security Council and discussed in its meetings before both India and Pakistan consented to it because, firstly, it would infuriate democratic public opinion in the Sub-continent, secondly, it would be thoroughly exposed by the Soviet Union as diabolical plan for the imposition of American rule over the Kashmir Valley and thirdly, it might not get the wholehearted support of Britain, which might see in it a U.S. plan for securing a monopoly position in Kashmir and endangering British positions in the Sub-Continent".*[61]

American plan initially was to secure independence of Kashmir by keeping it under the trusteeship of the United States. They, however, later thought that such a plan for Kashmir's independence might not be carried out and accomplished. Americans wanted construction of defence bases in Kashmir, regarding which their army chiefs had also submitted a report to the President of America. They, therefore, sought to manouvre its independence with guarantee from the United Nations.

> *"The main outline and essential features of this plan were worked out as early as 1950. At the close of that year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the American armed forces had submitted a confidential report to President Truman recommending the construction of air bases in Kashmir and its conversion into an "independent" state under the trusteeship of the United States. As days passed, several influential elements in the United States and the American Press started presenting the Kashmir question in such a manner as to make it appear that the only solution consisted in making Kashmir an "independent" State with its "independence" guaranteed by the United Nations".*[61]

On subsequent developments and negotiations with Sheikh Abdullah, America modified its earlier plan and thought feasible to seek the "independence"

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[60] Vijay Kumar, "Anglo American plot against Kashmir"—P 176.

[61] Vijay Kumar, "Anglo American plot against Kashmir"—P 17.

of Kashmir with the guarantee of India and Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah was also mentally prepared to allow Jammu and Ladakh to merge with India, but to retain Kashmir Valley as "Independent State" with the support of America. In other words it meant further partition of the State of Jammu & Kashmir and independence of the Valley under the tutelage of America, of course, with guarantee from India and Pakistan.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah mooted this plan with Kashmiri Pandit leader Sheonarayan Fotedar also in early 1953. Sheikh had told Fotedar that all the parties concerned should be happy over the plan as Pakistan had already got a chunk of the State territory and Jammu & Ladakh would go to India, the Valley would remain independent with the support of America. The Sheikh further told him that American Dollars would flow in the Valley by way of aid, banishing its poverty and enriching it, and the people also would like it. Sheonarayan Fotedar, however, did not agree with the Sheikh and stressed the need for remaining within the frame work of Indian Constitution. [62]

Ruling National Conference was, therefore, laden with chaos and confusion. It had reached the stage of split. Schism was caused in the ruling Party by Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah himself. He attacked the Constituent Assembly also which was convened by him. For returning his own selected members only to this Assembly, he overawed and subdued all others who wished to contest the election. And now surprisingly, he expressed want of faith in his members and in the Constituent Assembly that he brought into being, for, none should have had opposed his political bunglings. He also subsequently denounced its validity and competence to take decisions on vital issues. The Constituent Assembly was once regarded by the Sheikh as valid instrument of reflection of public opinion when it had to abolish the institution of hereditary autocracy or to establish permanent popular rule in the State. But when its members dared to express disagreement with the Sheikh on vital issues like the extent of accession, he would debunk it. How fantastically he behaved and how the backward and innocent Kashmiri Muslim masses still trusted him and followed him, was not uncommon about him. Kashmir had to pay from its nose, as reveals this book, for his fickle mindedness. The conscientious and advanced people would hardly tolerate such leaders and rulers. But that was not the case in Kashmir.

> *"Abdullah questioned the representative character of Constituent Assembly. In the speech delivered last Friday at Ganderbal, Abdullah categorically said". It is not the Constituent Assembly that will decide the future of Kashmir, but the people of the State".*

62. This was revealed to the author by Late Mr. Sheonarayan Fotedar himself who was a National Conference M.P. from Kashmir in 1953. He had later become Chairman of the State Legislative Council.

> *In his numerous addresses to National Conference workers behind closed doors, he is reported to have questioned the representative character of the Constituent Assembly.*
>
> *Already several Constituent Assembly members have taken strong exception to what they describe as Sheikh Abdullah's 'Slighting' of the Assembly which he himself had described reportedly as the 'Sovereign body of Kashmir' and the "Voice of the State".*[63]

A memorandum dated August 7, 1953, was addressed to Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State by his three Cabinet colleagues, Bakshi Ghualm Mohamed Dy. Prime Minister of the State, Shyam Lal Saraf, Health and Industries Minister and Girdhari Lal Dogra, Finance and Law Minister. They criticised him therein for creating tension and disregarding the awoved policies of National Conference and the Government. This memorandum forms an important historical document which reflects the functioning of the first popular government in the state and the chaotic conditions created by it in various spheres. The allegations levelled by his Cabinet Ministers headed by no less a person than the Deputy Prime Minister, against their own leader and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, contained in the memorandum, reveals much than it conceals and conceals much than it reveals, not only about the State affairs but also about the inner mind and tendencies of Sheikh Abdullah. It, however, formed basis for future political trends and troubles in the State. As such, the full text of this memorandum is reproduced hereunder:

> *"You will kindly recall that in the course of meeting of the Cabinet held on August 7, 1953, and on many other occasions previously, we brought to your notice that certain pronounced tendencies indicating a very sharp divergence of opinion had become manifest in our approach to the broad policies which form the basis of the Government and the administration. Contrary to the formal practice of a uniform policy in the conduct of the administration, it has become increasingly clear that Mr. Beg and you in utter disregard of the opinion of your colleagues and without their consultation, make public pronouncements which flout the principle of joint responsibility.*
>
> *Since the formation of the present Government, in spite of the constant endeavour of your colleagues to secure maximum agreement and unity in the execution of essential policies in accordance with the mandate given by the people, you have frequently adopted certain arbitrary measures in complete denial of the right of expression of opinion of even your own colleagues in the handling, both of external and internal affairs of the State.*

[63] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, August 7, 1953.*

Most of these measures and policies have been self-contradictory and inconsistent, leading to serious complications. After the establishment of the Legislative Assembly, we have expected that our joint responsibility and collective functioning as a Cabinet would be governed by well-established Parliamentary practices.

But we regret to observe that you have not only disregarded the wishes of your colleagues in the Cabinet, but have acted in the Legislative Assembly also in a manner which denied the right of freedom of expressing their opinions to the representatives of the people in regard to the basic policies pursued by the Government.

In the past even though occasions have arisen when we seriously opposed certain measures which affected the efficient and smooth functioning of the administration, we refrained from bringing matters to a head by making concession to your views in the interests of securing harmony and concord in the working of the Government.

Unfortunately however, this spirit of accommodation has been misconstrued by you and you have consequently adopted an attitude which is far from being democratic and indicates a tendency towards making arbitarary use of power and position.

Your attitude with regard to the political and economic policies of the Government has given rise to a great deal of confusion in the public mind and serious dislocation in economic life of large sections of the people.

For quite some time now, a factional tendency has been evident in the Cabinet, which has been responsible for a progressive deterioration in the administration. Consequently, various ameliorative measures proposed by the members of the Cabinet in good faith have not been implemented honestly.

Above all, there has been a singular failure to exercise vigilance and proper supervision in the day-to-day functioning of the administration, which has produced corruption, nepotism, inefficiency and wanton wastage of public resources in most spheres of Government activity.

All those acts of omission and commission have inevitably created large-scale discontent in various parts of the State.

All along, the Goverment has lacked a sense of uniformity and direction in its plans and programme. Time and again, we have brought to your notice the imperative need of arresting this process of deterioration in the administration.

We attempted to represent the feeling of various sections of the people who were facing acute economic distress. We even indicated the urgent necessity of undertaking immediate measures for the amelioration of *these conditions.*

But we regret to say that you not only disregarded all our opinions in this respect, but have even ignored the recommendation of the Wazir Committee, which had been set up by the Government to inquire into a number of grievances of the people.

Consequently, the political uncertainty has been accentuated with the result that our economy has been thrown into stagnation, which has impoverished large masses of people.

When the tourist traffic showed healthy improvement last year, and this year, you destroyed public confidence through your irresponsible utterances. This has created large-scale unemployment and economic unrest throughout the country.

The events of the last few months have in particular thrown the State in the midst of a severe crisis. The repercussions of this crisis are bound to be serious and far-reaching.

We regret to state that you, as the head of the Government, have not only failed to take note of the situation but have by your words and deeds accentuated the tension.

You have consistently refused to acknowledge the responsibilities that devolve on you as the Prime Minister of the State by not following the declared policies that form the basis of the Government.

All these factors have combined to strengthen the disruptionist forces seeking the disintegration of the State.

As is well known, the unprovoked aggression from Pakistan had put our very national existence at stake. In that critical hour of crisis, all of us jointly approached India for help and requested her to accept the accession of the State and assist us in repelling the aggression and restoring peaceful conditions in the State.

The united will of the people stood solidly behind this act of Kashmir's accession to India. While accepting our request, the Government of India assured us of the right of self-determination for our people.

After the convening of the Constituent Assembly, certain inescapable elaboration of the State's relationship with India were defined in the Delhi Agreement, of which you were the chief architect on our behalf.

Your stand was unanimously endorsed by the Government, the National Conference, the Indian Parliament and the Constituent Assembly of the State.

But you have not only deliberately delayed implementation of the agreements on these matters, which form the sheet-anchor of our policy, but have purposefully and openly denounced these in public. You have thus

> *arbitrarily sought to precipitate a rupture in the relationship of the State with India. Though it is true that the people of the State have the ultimate right to decide their future, the conditions of chaos and confusion which are being engineered today by you are bound to be fatal for the exercise of right of self-determination by our people.*
>
> *Under these circumstances what seems inevitable is that interested foreign Powers may well take advantage of and exploit the situation for their own selfish purpose.*
>
> *Mr. M.A. Beg has persistently been following policies of narrow sectarianism and communalism, which have seriously undermined the oneness of the State.*
>
> *Unfortunately, you have been lending your support to his policies in the Cabinet and his activities in public. This has generated bitter feelings of suspicion and doubt in the minds of the people of the various constituent units of the State.*
>
> *You have connived at all these unfortunate happenings and thus strengthened and encouraged the forces of disruption. The result is that unity and the secular character, the two fundamental aspects of our State stand threatened today.*
>
> *We have been constantly urging upon you to put an end to these unhealthy tendencies and to undertake unitedly measures for restoring the morale of the people. In spite of our best intentions, we have failed in our efforts.*
>
> *It is, therefore, with great pain that we have to inform you of our conclusion that the Cabinet constituted as it is at present and lacking as it does the unity of purpose and action, has lost the confidence of the people in its ability to give them a clean, efficient and healthy administration".*

The copy of the memorandum was forwarded for information to the Sadri-Rayasat on the very same day. It was clear proof of failure of the Cabinet members to pull together. Disagreement on fundamental issues as they had, led to crisis in the Government as also in the State. The first National Conference Government was, therefore, a failure and was bound to be dissolved on a very sad note of fundamental differences and ideological cleavages which cropped up amongst those who were holding the mutual trust and were once the dependable colleagues in waging the freedom struggle, shoulder to shoulder, under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. He was now discredited by his own close colleagues for his unpredictability as also undependability and playing political gimmicks with them, with the Government of India and above all, with the people of India, as well as for vacillating like a child. It was really a painfull day in the political history of Kashmir, not only for his life long colleagues who reached a stage of parting ways with him, but also for the people on exposition of the hollowness of the achievements derived with the Congress blessings and struggle, showing what it was all worth for. It was almost helplessness and negation of freedom and democracy in face of caprice and whim of their leader and guide.

Kashmir was, therefore, heading towards a deeprooted crisis. Sheikh Abdullah was holding the office of Prime Minister and yet creating confusion and uncertainty both, in the administration and among the people who were groaning under economic distress. He misused his power as the Prime Minister of the State and flared up the situation which was already explosive. The Indian Express dated August, 8, 1953 editoraiilly commented on this situation:

> *"The Kashmir problem which has been with us for six years, has thrown up a new aspect in recent weeks. The direction of changes is clear and unfortunate, but the cause is still mysterious. Whether it is personal ambition, as some say, or foreign influence, as others suggest, the drift from democracy has become marked. The postponement of the election to the National Conference, and the delay in convening a meeting of the Constituent Assembly.—to implement the Delhi pact, have created a situation, which needs a lot of explaining, not only with reference to previous history but in the immediate practical interests of the people of Kashmir.—The Wazir Committee's report amounts to an adverse verdict on the economic and administrative policy of the Abdullah Government. The economy of Kashmir has been upset, and the people suffer great distress for which they hold the Government of Kashmir responsible.*
>
> *Even amongst the members of the Government, there does not appear to be either harmony or unity of outlook. Expression has already been given in public to this divergence of opinion and the frequency with which mutually contradictory statements have been made, points to a position which is fast deteriorating. The postponement of elections to the National Conference and the failure of resuming the Constituent Assembly have resulted in denying to the people of Kashmir an opportunity to express their views and their wishes, while various conflicting and inconsistent statements are being issued by leaders whose authority at the movement is not beyond question. Abdullah is in minority. There would thus appear to be a Constitutional anomaly in the State".*

CHAPTER IX

Fiasco of first popular government

The Sadr-i-Riyasat Karan Singh called Sheikh Abdullah and asked him to resign but he declined and went to Gulmarg. He was, therefore, left with no alternative but to dismiss the Sheikh and to inform him about dissolution of the Cabinet and having him relieved of the powers and functions, of civil administration, on his failure to carry on the burden of the Government. Karan Singh accordingly despatched an urgent letter on August 8, 1953, to Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah as Prime Minister of the State in this behalf. This letter of the Sadr-i-Riyasat is reproduced below:

"KARAN MAHAL,
Srinagar,
August 8, 1953.

My Dear Sheikh Abdullah,

You will recall that in the course of our meeting today, I conveyed to you my deep concern at the serious differences which exist in your Cabinet. I impressed upon you the immediate necessity for restoring harmony and unity of purpose among the members of the Cabinet in the execution of its policies. You were, however, unable to assure, that these acute differences could be remedied.

This conflict within the Cabinet has for a considerable time been causing great confusion and apprehension in the minds of the people of the State. The situation has reached an unprecedented crisis with the effect that three of your four Cabinet colleagues have, in a memorandum to you, a copy of which they have sent to me, expressed their complete dissatisfaction with your actions and policies, which have lost the present Cabinet the confidence of the people.

This document clearly indicates that the divergence within your Cabinet has reached proportions in which the unity, prosperity and stability of the State are gravely jeopardised.

When we met today, I further suggested to you that an emergency meeting of the Cabinet should be held at my residence this evening so that we could jointly explore the possibilities of securing a stable, unified and efficient Government for the country. But to my regret you evaded this issue.

> *Under these conditions, I, as head of the State, have been forced to the conclusion that the present Cabinet cannot continue in office any longer and hence, I regret to inform you that I have dissolved the Council of Ministers headed by you. A copy of my order in this connection is attached herewith.*
>
> *I need hardly to add how deeply distressed I was at having to make this action, but the vital interests of the people of the State, which it is my duty to safeguard, leave me no alternative. I trust that this will in no way affect the mutual regard and cordial feelings we have for each other.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*
> *Karan Singh,*
> *Sadr-i-Riyasat."*

Sheikh Abdullah was, therefore, dismissed and was also arrested as a precautionary measure alongwith 30 other associates including Mirza Mohamed Afzal Beg under Public Security Act. He was lodged in District Udhampur. When the Sheikh was served upon the orders of dismissal and arrest, he lost temper and shouted upon the Police. He threw all the papers about "Independent Kashmir" in the burning stove and burnt them which also included a proposed map of his "Independent Kashmir", before he was arrested. It was an event of national interest and importance. The entire nation was extremely concerned with and excited over the past developments in Kashmir leading to the Sheikh's arrest. The dismissal "is reported to be a sequel to Sheikh Abdullah's demanding resignation from his cabinet colleagues and supporters who did not see eye to eye with him on his new stand of independence for the Valley".[64] It was also expressed that "some time in May Sheikh Abdulah, after protracted discussions with several foreign visitors made up his mind to accept the "escapist solution" of independence for the Valley.[65] The Sheikh had lashed out at G.M. Sadiq, President Jammu & Kashmir Constituent Assembly, for describing the Sheikh's idea of "independence" as "childish and foreign inspired". Sadiq later hailed the Sheikh's dismissal and described it as "timely action".

The fall of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was generally hailed by leaders of different political hue and colour. They welcomed the action of Sadr-i-Riyasat and expressed support in favour of the new Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed. It showed the nation's alertness to the affairs of Kashmir and deep interest therein. The Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, while reading a prepared statement on the developments of Kashmir, told the Lok Sabha:

> *"Not only this house but the country at large must have viewed these developments with anxious concern. The State of Jammu and Kashmir*

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[64] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, August 10, 1953.*

[65] *Ibid.*

*has been to us not merely a piece of territory which acceded to India five and three quarter years ago, but a symbol representing certain ideals and principles for which our national movement has always stood and which have been enshrined in our Constitution. It was community of those ideals and principles which brought the State in a moment of grave crisis,*in *October, 1947, into the larger family of India. But even before that constitutional development took place, a devotion to these ideals and to certain common purposes had brought the national movement of the Jammu & Kashmir State in line with the struggle for freedom that inspired our people. In the Kashmir State, it was the National Conference which represented this struggle and spoke on behalf of the masses of the people there. The association of the State with India, therefore, had a deeper significance than even the Constitutional link that was built up".* [66]

Acharya Kripalani entertained hope *"that this action will clear the atmosphere and will guarantee to Kashmir an honest, efficient and progressive administration".* [67] Mr N.C. Chatterjee, President Hindu Maha Sabha said, *"This is the first step in the right direction, any further vacillation may have had far reaching consequences.—As responsible citizens of free India it is our duty to rally all nationalist forces and to forge a united front in order to stand by the Government of India and the Goverment of Kashmir ensuring peace and stability of Kashmir and progressive understanding and cohesion with India".* [68] Commenting on it, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia PSP leader said, *"I only want that the Hindus and Muslims should be welded into a single nation and whatever developments take place in Kashmir, I shall test them by that criterion. I hope the people of Kashmir will continue to adhere to this one nation ideal".* [69] Pakistan newspaper Dawn described it as a "challenge to Pakistan". In an editorial it said, *"we strongly urge our Prime Minister to consider the situation seriously in the light of the new developments"*[70]. The Indian Express, justifying the action of the Sadr-i-Riyasat said in its editorial on August 10, 1953, *"It is the duty of the head of the State to preserve the substance of democratic Government and failure to adopt such a course would have amounted to abdication of responsibility by the head of the State".* In its another editorial, the Indian Express on August 11, 1953, said, *"The efforts of the Sadr-i-Riyasat to compose, the serious differences which existed in the Abdullah Government and his decision to dissolve the Cabinet were inspired by the urgent need to safeguard the unity, propriety and stability of the State".*

66. The Indian Express, August 11, 1953.

67. The Indian Express, August 10, 1953.

68. Ibid.

69. The Indian Express, August 11, 1953.

70. Ibid.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah himself long thereafter described his dismissal and arrest as a conspiracy hatched against him by Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and Maulana Mohamed Syed Masoodi in collaboration with Government of India. But Maulana Masoodi refuted the allegation of the Sheikh and said that various factors, including Sheikh Abdullah's determination to reopen certain settled basic questions on majority opinion in the party and the Government at that time contributed to his ouster from power. It was clarified:

> *"The Maulana, veteran freedom fighter, who was the General Secretary of the ruling National Conference in 1953, held that Sheikh's arrogant attitude towards Central leaders and the growing rivalry between the late Deputy Prime Minister Bakshi and Mirza Afzal Beg had aggravated the situation which eventually led to the Sheikh's dismissal.......Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah addressing National Conference workers at Mujahid Manzil yesterday on the occasion of his party's observance of '9 August Day', reiterated that the Central Government had brought about his ouster in a conspiracy with his former colleagues......... Significantly he did not mention the allegation involving him in a conspiracy with the US. Government in the 50's for the separation of Kashmir from India. The allegation is contained in recently declassified state department documents of 1950 which said that the then U.S. envoy to India Loy Henderson had clandestinely met the Sheikh to discuss an alleged separation plan. The Sheikh has maintained complete silence over this allegation"*.[71]

After Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed was sworn in as new Prime Minister of the State on August 10, 1953, explained in a broadcast from Radio Kashmir Srinagar on the same evening, the circumstances which pointed out chaotic conditions coupled with the sense of maintaining the unity and integrity of the country that impelled him to take up the new responsibility. He said:

> *"Today, a momentous decision has been taken which will determine the course of our national history. As you are aware, during the last few months, the entire State had been forced into a grave political and economic crisis, which threatened to disintegrate it and disrupt the unity of its people"*.

He referred to the ideals and principles that had kept them together, but were now repudiated by some colleagues who aimed at destroying the democratic fabric in the State. His obvious hint was at Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his supporters. He further said:

> *"In the course of our joint struggle for liberty what kept us together was the community of ideals and principles. These principles formed the bed-rock of the democratic movement in our State. But of late, we were extremely*

[71] *The Hindustan Times*, August 11, 1978.

> *shocked and grieved to see that our former colleagues were not only repudiating these vital principles, but were attempting to destroy all vestiges of democratic functioning in all spheres of administration and organisation"*

Alluding to Sheikh Abdullah's actions, utterances and attempts to create "Independent Kashmir" with the support of foreign powers, Bakshi expressed that that created a grim situation. He further said:

> *"Certain recent developments have made it possible for disruptive forces to make desperate attempts at the disintegration of the State. The activities and utterances of some of our erstwhile colleagues make it clear that they have been thinking in terms of carving out a portion of the state from the wreckage as an 'Independent State'*
>
> *These moves have naturally the connivance and support of interested foreign powers who have all along been resisting the exercise of the right of the people of the State of freedom and Self-determination.*
>
> *The present situation threatens to open up explosive possibilities for the future of the problem of Jammu & Kashmir unless the designs of these forces and their foreign supporters are foiled in time.*
>
> *There are elements at work today for the merger of the State with Pakistan or India and in the midst of ensuing confusion, some opportunist elements are dangling the alluring picture of an "independent State before the people".*[72]

The appointment of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed as Prime Minister was made subject to his securing vote of confidence from the Legislature. On October, 5, 1953, he obtained vote of confidence from the State Legislative Assembly. The House approved unanimously the confidence motion and expressed "complete faith in the new Ministry" and hailed the timely action of Sadr-i-Riyasat in dismissing Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. Introducing the motion Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed *"stressed the importance of Kashmir's fraternal ties with India and said that an honourable position had been secured for the State under the Indian Constitution".*[73]

It was amidst great tension in the Valley that Bakshi Ghulam took over as a new Prime Minister of the State. Hundreds of Sheikh's party men were arrested and detained in prison. A mass resentment was witnessed on the Sheikh's dismissal and arrest, which was coupled with violence at various places. This situation lasted for many days and it was not an easy task to control it. Many demonstrators lost their precious lives. It was not only a stalemate on the administrative level but also a crisis on the political level.

It was the strength of political consistency and conviction as also boldness of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed that he dared to replace Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah during those days of turmoil and tormentation. "He was our towering leader whose feet we might even kiss", Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed once told me about Sheikh Abdullah and added, "He was my sixth 'Eamaan' (tenet), but in the interests of our country, Bakshi continued, "I had to imprison him".[74]

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[72] *The Indian Express, August 10, 1953.*

[73] *The Hindustan Standard, Delhi, October 6, 1953.*

On taking over as new Prime Minister of the State, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed did not come out of his heavily guarded official residence for three days. He came out in the open when some nationalist Muslims of the down town like Ghazi Abdul Rehman, Ghulam Ahamed Sofi, Haji Ghulam Mohamed and Saif-ud-Din Makhdumi (all dead now) and others organised and led a huge procession in the city of Srinagar. The processionists hailed Bakshi and raised slogans such as "Azad Hindustan Zindabad". "Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed Zindabad". When the procession, mostly constituted of the Kashmiri Hindus (and the author was one of them) reached Pologround, Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq appeared and addressed it. He denounced Anglo American conspiracy against Kashmir and criticized Sheikh Abdullah for change of the stand which he described as an anti people action. He justified the dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah and reiterated that Kashmir was a part of India. He spoke with conviction and confidence and opposed the foreign intervention in Kashmir tooth and nail. He was the first leader in 1953 change over, who inspired confidence among the audience in "Democratic India". The processionists then went to the Premier's residence. Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed came out and addressed them, emboldened as he was at the sight of procession that came to congratulate him and assured him of the support at that time of crisis. He spoke to his audience and explained the facts and circumstances which necessitated deposition of Sheikh Abdullah and his taking over as the new Prime Minister. He expressed that accession of Kashmir with India had taken place legally which was irrevocable and no body howsoever high he might be, would be allowed to challenge or defeat that accession. He himself raised the slogan "Azad Hindustan Zindabad". (Long live India).

The procession, however, was indicative of a broad outline of division of loyalties of the people between the two camps, pro-Accession and anti-Accession. Pro-accessionists were essentially pro-India and anti-accessionists were not essentially pro-Pakistan. To analyse it, these camps respectively included the elements who were pro-India as against Pakistan and were pro-Independence as against India. Pro-Pakistan group also existed in Kashmir but was so small and subdued that it was non-efficacious.

[74] The author was in the Praja Socialist Party delegation which called on the State Prime Minister Mr . Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed in 1957. In the course of discussion, Bakshi Sahib used the words quoted above. (A Muslim has five Islamic tenets to follow. Bakshi Sahib meant to say that Sheikh Sahib was his sixth tenet.)

At the face of it, dismissal and arrest of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was neither fair nor democratic. Even then the action was overdue, inevitable and justified on moral and political grounds as well as on patriotic considerations and for the unity and integrity of the country. Legally and constitutionally Sheikh Abdullah's stand and reversion of decision was wholly bad: it was a crime against the "State" and its sovereignity, entailing exemplary punishment, which the Sheikh, however, did not receive. Judging in the background of developments that have been referred to in the preceding pages, it did not behove a great leader, much less a Prime Minister, to change his stand on such vital, basic and delicate matters like Accession which was decided once for all, and to have a reverse gear. It did not enhance the respect and prestige of Kashmiris but gave a set back to their credibility. Kashmiri Muslims more than Hindus, were shown love and respect throughout the country after Kashmir's accession to India and appearance of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah on the scene of country's mainstream. It did and should have rendered a valuable support to the secular and progressive forces and elements in India. But the Sheikh's whims and clumsiness did not contribute to the growth of these elements which certainly received a great set back by his vacillations and anti-national postures.

However, the communal conditions in India could not have been as good as they were due to Kashmir's accession to India and the publicity that its secular aspect received. India divided as it was, on the basis of Hindu and Muslim, might have been posed with much worse a communal problem, but for Kashmir's accession to India and eulogising Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference as the main architects of this accession. Creation of this partition, Pakistan had her own way to oust and suppress the Hindus and to grab forcibly and illegally one third territory of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, leaving hardly any Hindu, Sikh in the annexed area, and those who were alive in the left behind lot, got converted to Islam. They are today living as Muslims there. The reverse of it neither happened in Kashmir nor elsewhere in India.

If Sheikh Abdullah never wished to practise what he appeared to profess, he should have in that event always prepared himself to face the consequences, good or bad. But he should not have tried to dupe the people and others, if not himself. He could have opposed Kashmir's accession to India openly and preferred to languish in the Maharaja's prison or to leave himself at the mercy of his fate in case Kashmir had a fall and was caputred by Pakistan. He, however, wanted to have his person, his family and position, safe and secured as also wanted to wield absolute power. But at the same time he wanted to be a turn coat and ditch the person or persons who had lifted him from the abyss. Well, it is also tolerable and okay if it were merely a relationship and transaction between two or more individuals and affecting their persons and fortunes alone. But it was involving the future of crores of people, a nation, and a country. How could it be allowed to be done and who could venture to do it, howsoever high he might have been neither such a person could have been spared nor should be, as it amounted to both, to be a traitor and to commit a treason. It is a tragedy of Kashmir, if not of Sheikh Abdullah, that latter's political inconsistency and varying stand and postures, prompted by exigencies of time or motivated by his political hypocracy, have created more miseries and problems for the people of Kashmir than sought to have alleviated and solved.

CHAPTER -X

Subversion of democracy

People were conferred basic civil rights after advent of popular rule in the State. The political structure and fabric could not be other than democratic being part of the Indian Democracy, unless the situation so warranted. Its Constitution, adopted in 1956, has laid the frame work for a democratic socialist and secular society. How far the people of the State enjoyed the fruits of democracy and the rights and liberties guaranteed to them, is a matter to be gone into? It does not, however, evince satisfactory adherence to the fundamentals. The first regime of Sheikh Abdullah set wrong conventions, traditions and precedents which displayed despotic behaviour, and authoritarian functioning more poignantly than normal democratic conduct of the Government. It degenerated as the political preachings and postures of Sheikh Abdullah changed and created an atmosphere of confrontation rather than conciliation.

On the eve of August 9, 1953 episode, the political situation in the State was explosive. It does not appear to have come out of the vicious circle which it was involved in, from the very beginning. The loyalties of the people were divided. The link forged between Kashmir and rest of India was sought to be weakened and snapped, instead of being strengthened. The link between people to people was envisaged, to mingle up and merge into one strong nation, though heterogeneous in composition, turned a far fetched idea.

The contour of the situation was changed. The fall out of the partition of India based as it was, on the two nations theory, was some how discernable in a large section of the Muslims. The apparent secular and progressive movement of Kashmir could be a strong bulwark against the aftermath of the partition of India. Words and deeds of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah demolished the citadel that had kept away the germs of the communal politics born out of this partition. The Sheikh and all his supporters were expelled from National Conference and Bakshi carried the party with him.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah again projected himself as hero of Kashmir Muslims and marked a retreat from his commitment of "Accession", leaving tough time for Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed to deal with. The mosques had become as usual rallying centres, which is more so at the times like the one Kashmir was facing. The mosque politics as already indicated, has always played an important role in Kashmir for a sizeable section of the Muslim population. It again assumed the colour of Muslim versus Hindu, though in a different form. The religious sentiments of the Muslims were naturally invoked and exploited. The adverse programmes, therefore, would mostly be communicated through the assembly in the mosque and it would be known to Muslims throughout the Valley simultaneously, without depending on any other media of communication. The mosque politics, as in the past always, did play a role in post 1953 period also. It kept the movement and anti India sentiment alive to some extent, which otherwise might have been vanished to an appreciable extent.

The pulling force of the post 1953 movement was almost the same as in pre 1947. Broadly speaking, the former struggle was by the "Muslim Subjects", against the "Hindu Maharaja". It was renewed and was now, by the "Muslim Citizens" of Kashmir against the "Secular India" which they treated as "Hindu India", for "emancipation". This struggle was, however, diluted by the fact that in the previous struggle, the Hindu Maharaja was the immediate target. It was not now a "Hindu Maharaja" or a "Hindu ruler", but the nationalist Government of Jammu & Kashmir State, headed by a "Muslim ruler" as Prime Minister. It was not, as such, "Hindu Maharaja" against whom the struggle was launched directly but was against a "nationalist ruler" who was a Muslim, watching fully the Muslim interests. It was the Government headed by no less a person than a Muslim who was himself on the vanguard of struggle against the Maharaja's rule, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed, supported by other old guards of the movement, which blunted the sharp edge of the agitator's weapon of attack. Nevertheless, opposition persisted to the Government of India. Sheikh Abdullah's post 1953 movement was anti-Accession and pro-plebiscite.

Under these circumstances, democracy and democratic institutions could not be given free and fair play. It otherwise meant allowing the opposition to grow against India and any slackness exhibited, would have certainly gone against national interests . Strictly speaking, it was not a question of giving the opposition its due in its normal functioning and under normal conditions. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah's opposition was althogether a different type. He wanted separation of Kashmir Valley from rest of the country. It was not, therefore, opposition to the Government but opposition to the nation which hardly any sovereign country would countenance and which no body other than a traitor would demand. In accordance with his policy of independence for Valley of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah advocated "Right of Self determination " for the people of Kashmir. His ardent follower and colleauge Mirza Mohamed Afzal Baig, therefore, started Plebiscite Front. This party as the name itself indicated, stood for obtaining the right of plebiscite for the people of Kashmir. It enjoyed the patronage of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. Whenever was he set free from his detention, he used to repeat that future of Kashmir should be determined and decided by the people of Kashmir. What had remained to be decided after the State had acceeded to India?

A large number of workers were still wedded to Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and they, therefore, owed allegiance to Plebiscite Front. The post 1953 anti India movement was launched under the banner of Plebiscite Front. The Front was a force to reckon with. Some wiser elements in the Muslims, however, eventually felt that neither plebiscite would be held in the State nor was it possible to wean away

Kashmir from the Union of India. As such, Plebiscite Front could not render them any service nor would it survive for long, they calculated. Many of them, therefore, came forward to take benefits from the Government.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed appeared to be interested to keep the plebiscite movement alive. All those arrested in connection with this movement, were extended secretly all help and support so that they survived politically as well as economically. A person known to me, just to cite an example, told me one day as to how the Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed financed the dependent families of the detenus, arrested in connection with the plebiscite movement in post 1953. While narrating his personal experience he stated that he went to the house of his close relation one day to enquire about welfare of the family as their head of the family was arrested and detained in prison, being one of the leaders of Plebiscite Front. The family members, were worried and disgusted for want of money. While they were talking, the telephone rang and the wife of his detained relation attended the phone call. It was the Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed informing her that a man would come to her shortly to hand over an envelope and asked her to receive the same. That was all and the telephone rang off. He naturally developed curiosity to see what the envelop contained. He was still there, when a man rang the door bell and appeared. He handed over an envelope to the wife of the detenue and buzzed off. It contained money, he continued and added, "Before I left, another telephone call came. It was again Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed who enquired from this lady whether the envelope was delivered to her? "Yes", the lady replied and Bakshi dropped the telephone at once without asking or speaking anything more.[75] It is how Bakshi used to aid and help the Plebiscite Front people to keep the movement alive.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed, may be out of magnanimity also, took every care for education of the children of Plebiscite Front leaders and activists. He even arranged for their admissions to the Medical and Engineering Colleges as well as in other colleges and Institutions. Farooq Abdullah was also provided medical seat at Jaipur Medical College because of this policy. Jawahar Lal Nehru was keen in the welfare of Sheikh Abdullah's family, so much so that he had to exercise his influence when Sheikh Farooq was required to clear one of his M.B.B.S. papers (Physiology) in his fourth and last chance to qualify M.B.B.S.

Prime MInister Nehru was so watchful about him and so keen in his welfare that he did not want him to lose the final chance. He stooped low and wrote a personal letter to Dr. B.S. Kahali, Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology, Medical College Jaipur as he then was, stating that Sheikh Mohamed Farooq (now known as Dr. Farooq Abdullah) was as good as his son. He expressed his concern and added in case he did not succeed in his last chance, he would be turned out of the Medical College and that would be a very bad thing. Nehru's request was couched in polished words, to push up the boy. Sheikh Farooq cleared the paper that time in his final chance.

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[75] *My acquaintance narrated me the above incident about three years back in a meeting of People's Citizen Council, Srinagar. A member of this council, he is a responsible retired gazetted officer, He and the said Plebiscite Front leader are both alive. I have purposely avoided to mention their names lest they should suffer any embarassment in these abnormal situation.*

Was this all done out of magnanimity or for appeasement or in pursuance of a general policy to pamper Muslims and help them even at the cost of Hindus and national interests, which has remained unabated? A deduction can be made from the mess of facts and events after going through this book. Whatever the objective, it is clear that Bakshi had twin purpose behind it : Firstly, to sustain them in order to keep anti India movement alive which would make him strong enough and indispensable, so that he kept the Government of India under his thumb; secondly, he would earn good will and opposition to him might mitigate. This tendency of bargaining with and blackmailing Government of India has all through persisted and continues which has often landed India in crisis so far as Kashmir is concerned.

The slogan of holding plebiscite or seeking right of self determination is in itself treason on the one hand and on the other, would treat such a person or persons as non-citizens in the country deprived of fundamental rights, as such. It was something worst than being a traitor. If at any point of time such people were regarded as citizens, but these slogans with follow up action were bound to disentitle them of the protections that a citizen is otherwise entitled to. But strangely enough they have always been granted more and more concessions and rights.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed had, however, to be rough and tough also in dealing with such elements so that peace as well as law and order could be maintained in Kashmir. The complexity and graveness of the situation warranted adoption of some unpleasant and repressive measures. The result was that not only such elements suffered but the other opposition though pro-India, was also curbed. Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed probably found no alternative but to create an iron curtain and to crush the anti Accessionists to the extent they might not be able to endanger his power. But he is to be blamed for having not allowed the pro India opposition to survice and grow. As such, his regime was undemocratic in spirit and practice but democratic in form and appearance.

The Bakshi regime had asserted fully. No body dared to raise any slogan in favour of Pakistan or Independent Kashmir, nor any voice against India or Kashmir's accession to India was heard anywhere. That apart, even pro-Pakistan elements did not dare to listen to radio "Azad Kashmir" or Pakistan Radio. These Radio stations, Particularly "Azad Kashmir" had been and is even now, preaching Muslim fundamentalism, dessiminating anti India and anti Hindu propoganda using unparliamentary and slang language against them, preaching hatred, instigating Muslims to violence and feeding their listeners on false, unfounded and fabricated facts and stories.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed had set up a special wing of Police known as Special Staff headed by Senior Superintendent of Police Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali, with special powers. Ganderbali proved a terror, particularly against anti India elements, they would frighten even on hearing his name. Ganderbali was out and out for India, a fanatic Indian in the sense that no anti Indian could feel secure if he indulged in or ventured to continue his anti India activities or utterances.

Bakshi had set up Peace Brigade, to supplement police organisation. But it was meant mainly for political purposes. It served as a volunteer force in civil clothes to help his party. The work and actions of this Brigade were to aid the ruling National Conference or Government, to hold and conduct any public function or meeting. The "Peace Brigade" generally in civil clothes, had to disrupt the "peace"by attacking and disturbing any public function of any other group or party and then to restore peace of a graveyard. This naturally gave rise to an organised "goondaism" of the ruling party. In order to control the situation and to maintain law and order for smooth functioning of the Government, Bakshi was set to curb civil liberties and act arbitrarily.

Elections to the Legislature and local bodies were farce and press was not completely free and grant of permission to run newspaper was restricted. This was a period of "iron curtain". I was one of those who fought ceaselessly for long for the civil liberties and democratic values, knowing full well that the benefit of my sacrifice would go to the Muslim majority than to me or the minority. But it was a sincere endeavour to remodel and uplift the society and democratise the institutions that governed the people.

> *"Praja Socialist Party held a public meeting at Ichgam (Budgam) on 16th, March in connection with the elections. - Mr. Pyarelal Kaul and Qazi Mohi-ud-Din had come from Srinagar to address the meeting - During the course of his speech, Pyarelal Kaul expressed that the Government was dominated by the group which helped spread hooliganism in the State. - Referring to the freedom of press he stated that the throat of the newspapers was stifled which dared to criticise the Government genuinely and on the basis of truth and facts. Publication of such newspapers are discriminated against and placed on black list of the Government and the other newspapers, supporting the Government for all bad and good things, are conferred upon benefits"* .[76]

I also often contested the claims of Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad about having bestowed civil liberties on the people. One of my statements issued in this regard is reproduced as under:-

> *"I am surprised to read the recent statement of State Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad referring therein to civil liberties and claiming complete freedom of Press in the State. In view of the actual facts, this statement could not be expected from a responsible person like the Prime Minister. The fact is that the number of pro-Government and semi-Government newspapers have increased. If the people have real freedom of Press why is it so that permission for publishing new newspapers is not granted, nor*

[76] *The Hamdard, Srinagar, 23 March, 1957.*

> *some of the old newspaers are allowed to resume publication. Dozens of applications seeking permission to publish newspapers are already lying with the government. Not content with it, the Government has enforced section 50 now. The Government should leave the field open for genuine political activities, or else the State should be brought under President's rule till civil liberties are completely restored. Those indulging in anti-national activities and those found opposed to the Constitution and the Accession to India, the Government may certainly deal with them sternly.I appeal to the Government of India to see that the State rulers do not take undue advantage of the prevailing situation and suppress the civil liberties any longer. A strict watch be exercised over its authoritarian disposition and the same be forestalled."* [77]

I had unfolded the negative role played by Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front in my previous book. Plebiscite was an obsolete slogan and I had clearly suggested to them to join the mainstream and do constructive politicking to uplift the people and fight despotic rule. I wrote as far back as in early seventies:

> *"The main objective of Plebiscite Front is to seek the determination of future status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir through plebiscite. With day to day problems of the people, this Party has, by and large, no interest, nor it has ever fought for removal of their hardships. It is founded on the basis of negative politics. Those aligned with Plebiscite Front may have perhaps thought that Sun and Moon would not rise until they achieved the right of plebiscite; that they do not need unadulterated rations on cheaper rates; that they do not require good lanes, streets and roads, that they do not wish to have adequate quantity of water and power, that they discount the necessity of medical facilities, care and treatment, that the women folk should stop giving birth and no body should raise even a voice against the malpractices in vogue in the hospitals; that they are not entitled to the facilities and material benefits of the modern progressive world. After all, are they in favour of dispensing with all this till the right of plebiscite is achieved? The result of this is that Plebiscite Front practically pushed into cold storage all public grievances and complaints as also day to day problems and has done nothing than to raise there slogan for plebiscite.*
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> *Due to this apathy and misguidedness of Plebiscite Front, the ruling party always got the upper hand. It held the reins of Government conveniently as such due to the disinterestedness shown by a section of the people in the elections as well as in formation of the Government. Many people have been deriving on this account, undue advantages and facilities from the Central Government as the masses are deprived of many of their true and real representatives. This way Plebiscite Front and Mr. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah is responsible to a large extent, for perpetuating the*

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[77] *The Hamdard, Srinagar, 28th April, 1958.*

> *rule of a particular group in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. They should also accept their responsibility in according a cold shoulder treatment to the people, otherwise the claims of the rulers could effectively be contested besides forsaking them from taking undue advantage of situation and forestalling their actions of suppression. They would not have then found themselves competent to function arbitrarily and carry on with their acts of authortarianism; nor could have they suppressed the opponents, either by allurement or duress under the pretext of elections, nor succeeded in getting the men of their own liking, elected through undemocratic methods, nor a Hindu opponent could be crushed by terming him a Sanghite nor aMuslim opponent could be silenced by dubbing him as a Pakistani".*[78]

In the regime of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed, no law and order problem was experienced. He was able to overcome situations posing threat to his Government or hurling challenge to the "Accession" without much difficulty. Peace prevailed throughout the Valley, giving some times an impression of peace of a graveyard. At times the political atmosphere was found suffocating with which the people by and by tried to adjust. It became part of the normal life, particularly when G.M. Sadiq's Democratic National Conference let the people down and Sadiq, D.P. Dhar, Mir Qasim and Girdhari Lal Dogra deserted the organisation they had founded in 1957, and rejoined the Bakshi's Cabinet surreptitiously and overnight in 1961. People and democracy was given a set back always in Kashmir by the leaders themselves, either by misguiding the people or leaving them in the lurch. The Government never pondered over such happenings and the result was to come out in the distant future.

The inter-se strife in the National Conference had come to surface and continued between the "Progressive group" headed by Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq and the anti Communist group led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed. The top brass of "Progressive group" constituted of Communists and other persons, having mostly leftist leanings. Besides G.M. Sadiq, it included D.P. Dhar, Mir Qasim, Girdhari Lal Dogra and others. Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed was, therefore, fighting a twin battle, one against the anti Accessionists and second against the "Progressives" inside the Party and outside it. In 1964, G.M. Sadiq and his group came to power exclusively and to the exclusion of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed due to the intervention of Government of India as Bakshi was "Kamrajed". G.M.Sadiq became Chief Minister, after an intervening brief spell of Shamas-ud-Din ministry.

Bakshi had orgnised and built a cadre of his own workers in National Conference, many of whom had become powerful gangsters and wielded much influence in the Government. His workers and followers were nicknamed in Kashmiri as "Gogas".

A relation of his — Bakshi abdul Rashid was installed as General Secretary of ruling National Conference. This uncouth and powerful political despot was called "Kruschuvf", comparing him with the Russian leader of the same name. But the knowledge of things of Kashmiri "Kruscheuvf" was as little as his education was. He was made a Member of Parliament too. The first and the last time he had opened his mouth in the Parliament was when he uttered a sentence about Chinese incursion and said that China must accept "Manmohan Lal line" as border with India, treating Macmhan as an Indian. [79]

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[78] *Pyare Lal Kaul - "Kashmir Ke Shab-o-Roz", P. 180,181*

The other National Conference men were little despots, who could openly interfere in the administration. It created avenues for corruption and hooliganism and allround corruption was rampant in Bakshi's regime.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed was a strong nationalist Indian so were his "Gogas". "Gulla Gandhi" as Bakshi was called in early thirties when he had joined Khadi Bhandar, was not blessed with much academic education. But he had the capacity to organise and competence to run the Government. He succeeded in mellowing down Praja Parishad movement in Jammu region and worked with a single track mind. He cemented the bonds of kinship between Kashmir and rest of the country and put a seal of endorsement and finality to its accession with India. He had the guts to openly rebuff Pakistan in a course of his election speech made at Maharajganj, Srinagar, when he was out of power and was himself contesting for election to Parliament. He said, "If Pakistan destroyed our one plane, we will destroy her thousands of planes". He thus protested hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane from Srinagar to Lahore and setting it ablaze there.

He risked his election when all his adversaries including the Chief Minister G.M. Sadiq, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, Maulana Mohamed Syed Masoodi, Begam Abdullah and others were set to defeat him and to liquidate him politically. Defeated in the hustings though he was, yet this Indian stalwart was politically unsurmountable by the above combination of forces. His sudden demise, however, cut short his talented political career, and left behind a political void which could not be filled up. Even in Sadiq's regime, the fate of people was no good. He was a drawing room politician, lacking dynamism of Bakshi. This was not the fate of the people in the Bakshi regime only. Even in the Sadiq's Government, the people suffered by and large from the same vice of the Government.

Some eminent persons from different walks of life having different views on Kashmir, expressed concern on the manner the nomination papers to the State Assembly elections in 1967 were rejected on large scale. In a statement to the Press, they said:

> *"Rejection of 118 nomination papers in 39 out of 75 constituencies of Kashmir Assembly, including 22 unopposed returns, raises grave doubt about fairness of elections in Kashmir. As it affects the international reputation of India, Kashmir's faith in national institutions and future of democracy in the country, the matter should not be left to the usual lengthy*

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[79] *Bakshi Abdul Rasheed had referrered to "Macmhsn line". But he appeared to have thought that it was the border line drawn by an Indian named "Manmohen Lal" and quoted this name as such, instead of Macmhan, in his speech, which was perhaps the shortest one in the parliament.*

> *legal remedies of election petition; but should be probed into expeditiously and judiciously by a high powered authority. Till the results of the probe we urge postponement of the elections in Kashmir."* [80]

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[80] *The signatories to this statement were : C.D. Deshmukh, M.C. Setalvad, Meher Chand Mahajan, B.P. Sinha , K.G. Saiydain, B. Shiva Rao , Khushwant Singh, Jaitendra Kumar, G. Ramchandra, J.N. Khosla, Rajni Kothari, Lakshmi Jain, C.N. Singh, K.N. Rai, M.S. Srinivas, Gyan Chand, P.S. Lokanathan, S.L. Poplai, Sibnarayan Ray, Romesh Thapar, Durga Dass, Narendra, S. Mulgoakar, J.J. Singh, P.N. Bazaz, Frank Moraes, Ranbir, Jamana Dass Akhtar, Pir Zaman Nizami, M. Mujeeb, Sushil Muni, Abdul Ghani Dar, B.N. Ganguli, Krishna Kumar, Mohammad Shaffi, Sisir Gupta, Balraj Puri and Amlan Datta.*

CHAPTER - XI

Power and simmering discontent

The tussle for power ascendency continued even after "progressive group" of National Conference headed by G.M. Sadiq came to power. Bakshi and his National Conference tried to show down the Chief Minister Sadiq and his ministry by moving a vote of no-confidence against his ministry in the Assembly. As a prelude to it, Bakshi group gave a notice of the motion expressing want of confidence in the Speaker of the Assembly. The motion of "No Confidence" was sought to be fixed for debate in the Assembly. It put the Chief Minister Sadiq and his colleagues on pin pricks. The convened day of the Assembly came over their head. They did not appear in a position to withstand the challenge, being sceptical of their victory. They, therefore, got the Assembly Session prorogued and also arrested Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed. He was detained at Tara Mahal Palace, Udhampur. I met him there. He had lost hope in Sadiq's clean administration and dealings, but was in high spirits and had subdued faith in democracy of India and her people.

This tactical strategy adopted by Sadiq government was not only incompatible with norms and principles of democracy but was another heinous act of State despotism after deposition of Sheikh Abdullah. True, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed had also during his regime dealt with the above said progressive group shabbily, particularly after they had come out from the ruling National Conference and had formed a separate organisation of their own. He had also several times let loose "Peace Brigade" on their workers during the time of holding public meetings. The function of the Brigade was as already stated to disturb peace by doing violence on the spot and then to create and maintain peace of the graveyard. Sadiq showed me once some of his workers brutally injured by Peace Brigade and complained to me that Bakshi was toeing a communal line, when after some time, I had come back to Srinagar from Delhi.

But the question remained, whether democracy was to be given roots some where and whether people were to be satisfied at any point of time as to the pattern of Government that they were to live under and to enjoy its fruits or to suffer for its failings. The uncertainty should not have been allowed to come off, nor the matters could have been left in a state of drift, nor the people should have been left in the lurch. A certain margin can be allowed to the Government for some strictness, even harshness, in dealing with the anti national elements. This cannot and should not apply to the bonafide and loyal citizens of the country.

What type of picture of the Indian democracy was painted in Kashmir? After his release in 1964, when Sheikh Abdullah was invited to an "At Home", by the Bar

Association Srinagar, he also complained about it. While speaking to the lawyers in that function, Sheikh Abdullah expressed that Kashmir Valley was given a differential treatment and Kashmiris were deprived of the fruits of democracy whereas the people were enjoying the benefits of democracy across the Banihal. Although I noticed softness in his speech over his earlier anti India stance, yet he was himself precursor of this legacy and responsible for this deplorable situation prevailing in Kashmir all along.

In dealing with the anti-India elements and movements, the dispensation of democratic values and procedures may be understandable but in handling the pro-India forces and their activities in the same undemocratic manner and method was not conceivable. In either case democracy has always been a casualty in Kashmir. When pro-India activities are equated with anti national activities for purposes of treatment and punishment, what elements are then left to be groomed and what forces are then left to be grown in Kashmir? Who will then keep aloft the banner of the country and her democracy? A void was, therefore, automatically created on Indian Front, which was bound to be filled up in due course of time, by the undesirable elements and anti national forces. It is destined to create a deep rooted crisis, even worse than the present one. This delicacy in the situation has never been perceived by those at the helm of affairs of the country. They have erred in equating the party interests with the national interests in this sensitive border State. The result is obvious in shape of the present grave crisis.

Sadiq, unlike Bakshi lacked dash, capacity and stamina, to deal with the public and to have individual to individual contacts. The former was, however, desirous to give clean administration to the people without any political interference. With all limitations he tried to give a clean administration to some extent, except the communal part of it. He was instrumental in converting National Conference into the unit of Indian National Congress. But Bakshi kept National Conference alive with the help of remnant workers of his own. Sadiq also earned the distinction of bringing about two important Constitutional amendments, which was an important step towards furthering the emotional integration of Kashmir with India : The office of Sadr-i-Riyasat was converted into that of Governor and the designation of Prime Minister was changed into that of Chief Minister. These were his no mean achievements and contributions towards boosting politics of national mainstream.

Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq also embarked upon a policy of "political liberalisation". He wanted to fight Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front politically and not by keeping them behind the bars. As such, he withdrew the Conspiracy case against the Sheikh and his colleagues, and set him and other political detenues free.

Was Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq really in a position to fight Sheikh Abdullah politically, or was it to embarrass and crush Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed in the process and snatch initiative from him to lead the pro-India opposition? The presence of Sheikh Abdullah on the scene was sure to obstruct the vigorous functioning of any pro-India opposition. The attention had to be focussed on Sheikh Abdullah. He could not snatch power, under the prevailing situation, from Sadiq. It would rather help Sadiq to retain and hold power. Bakshi could be a threat to Sadiq's power, though the former was dislodged from power under Kamraj plan. He some how paled into insignificance in presence of Sheikh Abdullah. Sadiq as such, killed two birds with one stone.

Sheikh Abdullah gave call for "Tark-i-Mualat"(social boycott) with Muslims who owed allegiance to India and Indian parties. As a result thereof, the Sheikh's followers observed social boycott against the Muslims standing for Kashmir's Accession to India. Some of Sadiq's workers also had to undergo an embarrassing position when their close kith and kin died and nobody came forward to lend a helping hand, to dig a grave or to carry the "Jinaza" to the graveyard. The policy of liberalisation benefited the anti India elements and not the pro India parties.

With all his progressive outlook, if he had really any, Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq was the first to import communal virus openly in the administration. He was President Constituent Assembly at the time of Sheikh Abdullah's deposition in 1953. In addition thereto, Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed inducted him as Education Minister in his Cabinet. Sadiq laid a communal policy for recruitment and promotion in the education department in the proportion of 70% (Muslims) and 30% (Hindus). It was based purely on sectarian and communal considerations. Despite protests, he continued with this policy of discrimination against Hindus, which eventually became the firm basis of Government policy for communal discrimination against them in all spheres of administration for all times to come. It by and by eroded the concept of secularism, nationalism and socialism in the State. The cumulative effect of such like policies was also one of the factors leading to the present crisis.

The recruitments in Government service and promotions, admissions to educational and technical institutions and conferment of concessions, facilities and benefits on the basis of communal considerations was discounted by the Hindus. They wanted it to be done on economic considerations and not on communal grounds. Official organ of a Kashmiri Hindu organisation carried a protest note regularly for years together against the Government policy of classification on communal lines, at the top of the title page of the newspaper, but the Kashmir Government never bothered about it nor the Union Government cared for it and wounds continued to be inflicted on them in one way or the other. The continued protest note was addressed to the State Prime Minister and titled as "To the Prime Minister". It reads:

> *"The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir gives guarantee to every citizen of the State, of equal rights and opportunities regardless of race and religion. But the strange interpretation given and applied to the admissions to educational institutions, grant of scholarships, for payment of loans, in recruitment to services and other spheres is harmful to Kashmiri Pandits and is incomprehensible to them. It is based on communal considerations. According to this interpretation, even the son of a destitute Hindu widow does not fall within the backward category and all such citizens are deprived from all the benefits which the very rich members of the catagorised classes can avail. Functioning of the Government in such a manner, boosts up communal feelings and tendencies, which is dangerous for security of the minority as also for secularism. We appeal to the Prime Minister of Kashmir to remove this injustice at his earliest convenience and strengthen the roots of nationalism as well as to stop the infringement of the rights of the minorities.* [81]

It was also in the Sadiq 's regime when for the first time after 1947, open communal scuffle took place at Chinkral Mohalla, Srinagar on September, 11, 1964. In this attack on Hindus, apart from injuring male members of the Hindu community in the vicinity, the Panditanis were also dragged out by the attacking "Matahanjis" and injured mercilessly. The attackers violated their modesty and snatched forcibly their "dejhoroos" (golden ornament being nuptial symbol). The culprits were not brought to book, nor any action was initiated against them, various representations of the afflicted and aggrieved Hindus notwithstanding. One of the representations was made by residents of adjoining Malapora through one Mahand Koul Pir. It was addressed to Prime Minister G.M. Sadiq (as he then was) and copies forwarded to other authorities. The dispute was initially started by "Matahanjis". [82] when they forcibly and without any claim or right, snatched possession of an ancestral piece of land of a local Hindu resident with a purpose to construct unauthorisedly and illegally a shed thereon. On objection, the "Matahanjis", supported by other Muslims made premeditated attack on the innocent Hindus of the vicinity. The representation inter allia reads:

> *"Your good self be further fully aware of the fact that all the Mata Hanjis of this area took the law into their own hands and made a violent and preplanned attack on the entire innocent population adjacent to them for no fault of theirs. In effecting their evil design, the Matahanjis tried to give*

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[81] *The Navjeevan, Srinagar 25th February, 1964. It is the translation of protest Note No. 292. Prior to it, 291 times this protest note was repeated in this newspaper and also continuously was repeated thereafter for years. without any consequence.*

[82] *"Matahanjis" are those Muslims, who dwell in big boats known as "Khachoos" and use these for river transport .*

> *it a communal colour and arouse the passions and enlist the support of other non-Hindus. Thus an individual case was sought to be given a communal colour by the Matahanjis and as such, they depended wholly on their vulgarness and brutal physical force than showed faith in the rule of law, resulting in injuries to many of the Hindu residents of the area. It is surprising that inspite of all this the accused persons are still at large and roaming about and doing their business freely. After lapse of so much time neither the accused have been arrested nor Challan produced in the Court of law in a case of such grave nature. It creates doubts in our minds and we begin to apprehend the partiality of law and order maintaining agency and entertain a feeling of insecurity of life, honour and property".*[83]

On inaction of the State Government, the Hindus of the area were dejected. They finally sent a representation to Union Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri. The representation was sent to him by Ram ji and others on behalf of the residents of Chinkral Mohalla, which referring to Matahanji's incident, said inter alia:

> *".........they all assembled there in no time and made a murderous attack on the few Hindus trying to escape for life. However, giving good thrashing and inflicting injuries to them including the official of the Municipality, who all tried to flee to save life. The attack was made with lathis and axes.*
>
> *Not satisfied with this victory, all the Hanjis rushed inside the houses of the adjoining Hindus and pulled the innocent and unconnected persons out of their rooms, calling them bad names and denouncing Hinduism, crying that they would efface the name of entire Hindus, beat severely these innocent and unconnected persons whose misfortune was that they were incidentally Hindus. Even women folk were not spared. They were also dragged out of their rooms. Their modesty was openly molested: their breasts were pulled and "dhotis" (Saris) torn into pieces. The strings of their "dejhoroo" - a golden ornament hanging in the ears of every married Kashmiri Panditani, were pulled and thus their ears injured. Two "dejhoroos" were lost and later one was found in the lane. Over and above, they were also severely beaten. Amidst this lawlessness, a huge hue and cry was raised by these innocent persons—children, women and men in fright, but no help and assistance came. A few Hindus managed to go to the concerned Police Division (Banamohalla) but there was no one except Munshi who did not respond to their request. Any how they managed to give a ring to the concerned Police Station (Zainakadal) and the Police reached the spot very late.*
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> *We had hoped that the Police would function impartially and the culprits*

would be brought to book. But our hopes are belied. We wanted that the matter ought to have been remained confined to the two individual groups of the dispute. So far, it was a matter of dispute between the two individual parties, though the "Hanjies" committed high-handedness, we the rest of the Hindus were unconcerned and unconnected. But we were dragged into, beaten and insulted merely because we were Hindus. And in addition to it when Police began to take sides in this crucial case of lawlessness, which shatters the confidence of the minority in the Government, it creates a sense of insecurity among the members of minority community. The partiality of the Government was easily displayed by Police pressurising the Ward Inspector of the Municipality Mr. Chuni Lal Jalali who was also injured in the attack by Hanjis, to change his earlier statement giving the facts of this attack.

This state of affairs is very shocking. We cannot place as such, reliance on the State Government. Our sentiments have been injured, feelings hurt very badly. Kashmiri Pandit would never tolerate molestation of his womenfolk. Our ancestors have seen the cruelties of Pathans, Moguls and Chaks etc. But they have never allowed their honour to be played with and women folk insulted and molested.

We have already brought these things into the notice of the State authorities, but they seem to trample over us. Even the three local journalists were arrested for putting in black and white these facts and the publication of one Daily was stopped in this connection. This should be sufficient to convey to you the gravity of the situation and what attitude the Government is meting out to us.

If this state of affairs continues and our grievances are not redressed, then we would submit politely that our property should be given adequate price so that we say good bye to Kashmir for good and flee to other parts of India for honour and security. It is very lamentable that when our India is free, a class of its citizens feel itself to be under alien rule and insecured.

Before releasing this to the press and circulating it among the leaders of different political parties, we again humbly pray that justice be done to us and culprits be brought to book at the earliest".[84]

It was in Sadiq's regime when an orphan minor Hindu girl, Parmeshwari (now Perveen Akhtar) was enticed away and converted to Islam and married to a Muslim boy in 1967.

It is reported that circumstances were created to entangle her; she was blackmailed, forced to conversion and married to a Muslim boy. Some facts which

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83 & 84. *The copies of these representations were given to this author also for necessary action as Socialist functionary in the state.*

led to the Hindu agitation on this point, are given below:

> *"One Parmeshwari Handoo, a minor and the only daughter of a destitute Hindu widow of Rainawari, a suburb of Srinagar, was under stress of extreme indigence driven to take up the petty job of a Sales girl in the co-operative Departmental Stores, Srinagar. One Ghulam Rasool Kanth worked as a Cashier in the same Stores and received office cash from the Sales girl, as in other cases, daily at odd hours. During these official contacts he used all nefarious means to pressurize the virgin Sales girl. Her cash was occasionally declared short, or the notes were unacceptable, or the coins were counterfeit.*
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> *This destitute girl was pressurized in other ways as well e.g. stoppage of her pay for months together and allotment of late duty hours. The poor girl's home was four miles away from her place of duty and going at late hours from 9 to 10 in the night did the trick for these malicious intriguers. The Co-operative Departmental Stores was started with a Kashmiri Pandit as the Manager. One Shri Ghulam Hasan Qasba was later posted as Manager of the Co-Operative Departmental Stores. He took a leading part in aiding and abetting Ghulam Rassol Kanth cashier in seducing the pressurized girl. He in his official capacity covered up the embezzlement of Rs. 1472/- misappropriated by the cashier during this period. The amount was later refunded by some Tablig organisation of the majority community through some individual long after Ghulam Rasool Kant had slipped away from service and had been suspended for absence. In this manipulated situation with this background of the characters involved, the minor girl Parmeshwari Handoo, was found missing by her mother on 3rd August 1967, when she did not return home. Concerned, the poor mother went to the jurisdictional Police Station at Rainawari with the report that her daughter, aged 17, was missing from that morning. The abducted girl and the abductor were both traced on August 5, 1967, from a house not the parental house of Ghulam Rasool Kanth, at Wazapora in the interior of the city inhabited by only the members of the majority community (Muslim). Wazapora besides, is the rendezvous of pro-Pakistani element and the Islam Tablig Organisation........*
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> *The investigation was taken up by the Maharaj Gang Police Station where the Officer incharge was a Muslim and not by the Rainawari Police Station where the officer incharge was a Hindu and where the FIR was filed. The girl was later taken to Khanyar Police Station, an intermediary Police unit, between 5th and 6th August. This place is again the headquarters of anti-Indian organisation and a place where not a single Hindu resides. The place was within the easy reach of the abductor and his sympathisers.*

> *The girl was handed over back to the abductor unlawfully even before the Radiological examination was taken up. Extreme care was taken not to associate any non-Muslim in the Police investigation. The girl's mother was allowed to meet her for brief intervals in the presence of the Muslim officials. Nor was any other Hindu allowed to meet the girl except in presence of the Muslim officials. The investigating Police agency appropriated to itself the powers of the Court of law, took its own decision about the age of the girl, and let the abductor go scot free taking away the abducted girl. News went round at the time that the officer incharge of the investigation accompanied the girl to the abductor's residence and was treated to a sumptuous dinner. Agitated over the scandalous performance of the investigating Agency there was spontaneous reaction and resentment among the public in general".*[85]

It was not a simple case of conversion and marriage of a Hindu girl, which the Government and the ruling Congress tried to make it appear. If it were so, as in many other such cases, no agitation would have followed. It was the manner and method as to how a minority girl (the only child) of a helpless Hindu widow was seduced, converted to Islam and married with the help of Police. It was also a consideration as to how with the aid of foreign money and the connivance rather encouragement of the Government, some Muslim organisations and elements openly work for and are behind the conversion of Hindu girls in Kashmir. It was also a factor to provoke the Hindus as to why the Police in particular and the Government in general, became a party against the destitute Hindu widow in such deplorable cases which served as a warning to the Hindu community and created a sense of insecurity in them. Nothing was later known as to what happened to the cases files by the widow mother of the girl . It became, therefore, a question of their survival and gave them an immediate and grave provocation, though already singled out and choked on various fronts. In every regime there have been conversion of Hindu girls, most of them secretly. It had become of late, a one way traffic and no Muslim girl is allowed to convert and marry a Hindu. Neither the Government nor the Muslim majority community will spare them as an atmosphere of horror has been created in the Valley. It was, therefore, a serious indication and a grave trend and tendency, pointing out what was in store for Kashmiri Hindus in the future, which was nothing short of their liquidation in Kashmir. In other words, it meant defeating India in Kashmir as they believed. In pursuance of this policy, the hapless and helpless Hindus have been driven out of the Valley during the current terrorism.

The Chief Minister G. M. Sadiq made a statement on this episode in the State Assembly on August, 17, 1967. He inter-alia, said:

"Smt. Parmeshwari allegedly stated to the Police that she was a major and

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[85] *Kashmir Hindu Action Committee — What of the Vale*

> *had, of her own free will embraced Islam on 20th July, 1967 and married again of her free will, one Shri Ghulam Rasool Kant, on the 28th of July, 1967......*
>
> *The date of birth of the girl as entered in the admission register of Arya Girls High School where she had studied is reported to be 28th July, 1950 which is also the date entered in the records of the Jammu & Kashmir Board of Secondary Education. According to this her age would be 17 years on 28th July, 1967."*

The Chief Minister had also expressed that doubts were raised "*about the correctness of the manner and conclusions reached in these investigations.*" He had also told the Assembly that all these things would be "*gone into immediately*".

How fantastic it is that after allegedly embracing Islam on 20th July, 1967 and marrying on July 28, 1967, she still lived as a Hindu with her Hindu mother till August 3, 1967 when she was allegedly kidnapped ! After alleged conversion, Miss Permeshwari could not live as Hindu with her Hindu mother. And when she did so the alleged coversion and marriage were of no consequence. If the things were normal and smooth why then this secrecy was maintained all these days? The Chief Minister never got any probe conducted on the doubts entertained regarding the fairness of investigation and on the genuineness as well as legality of the girl 's conversion and marriage with a Muslim, allegedly with the aid of foreign money and some Muslim organisations working for the purpose, which received open support by the Government and the law and order machinery. A portion of the foreign money coming into Kashmir, is applied towards conversion of non-Muslim girls to Islam. The Government had interest in impliedly telling the Hindus that they had to live under the thumb of Muslims and had no say in the State. The Government and the ruling party also thought probably that by suppresssing and curbing Kashmiri Hindus, they would enlist sympathy of the Muslim majority community if exploited properly. It is how and why Hindu Agitation originated for their survival. Because of the above secret policy, the Congress ruling party of Kashmir asked Chairman Legislative Council Sheonarayah Fotedar, not to meddle in the matter. Fotedar wrote a personal letter to the Chief Minister G.M. Sadiq and inter alia, said therein:

> *"In the beginning of the trouble, I thought it my duty to give the concerned people the benefit of lead and guidance with the ultimate object of arriving at a settlement of a vexatious and irritating problem honourably and effectively, but a compelling advice from the Congress quarters to dis-associate myself made me, unwillingly though, remain aloof from the entire scene."* [86]

The Government and the ruling party was keen to suppress and crush Hindus and flared up the Muslim sentiment and instigated them to harass, torture and assail peace loving and loyal Hindus. The funeral procession taken out to cremate the two victims of police lathicharge, Maharaj Krishan Razdan (a teenaged student whose father was on duty in Canada) and Lassa Kaul Badam, was pelted with stones from different directions at Karannagar. The police encouraged the hooligans to subdue the mournful processionists.

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[86] *Wail of the Vale , P.9. Sheonarayan Fatedar was popular Kashmiri Pandit leader.*

> *"A contingent of the Kashmir Armed Police and Home Guards in plain clothes not only abetted and encouraged them, but also actively participated in stone throwing. The Police men were heard shouting aloud to their co-religionists 'O Mussalmano why do you worry, we are fighting infidels'. By the time part of "Arthi" eventually reached the cremation ground, the city was seized with terror as flames rose sky high in Karannagar and at three spots houses had been set on fire. Houses were broken into and looted. One person Shri P.N. Bhan was robbed and fatally wounded near the house of DIG Police Kashmir, wherefrom he was removed to State Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries later".*[87]

Some other Hindus succumbed to the injuries caused by one sided communal violence. They included Hirday Nath Mattoo, who was fatally injured at Nawpora (where not a single Hindu resides) while going to his house at Rainawari as usual, from his AG's office and Autar Krishan Khashoo who was stabbed to death. Gopi Nâth Handoo was also fatally wounded and killed.

Indiscriminate night arrests of Hindus were made by forcibly entering into the Hindu houses, without warrants of arrest or search warrants. The publication of some newspapers was banned by the Government including the official organs of Hindu Community, the Martand, the Jyoti and the Navjeevan. The entire Hindu minority was shaken in the whole Valley as the community members felt that both the Government and ruling Congress were bent upon to exterminate them. Even after the agitation was suspended, the Hindus were harassed.

> *"The minorities had a dark Deepawali, dark because their future appears dark in the circumstances prevailing at present. In this month Shri Poshker Nath Vakil announced to undertake self immolation on 10th November, 1967 as a protest against the deteriorating situation of law and order and for restoration of the abducted girl, and further demanded guarantee for security of life, property and honour of the minorities here but the Police arrested him.*
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> *—In case of a Muslim girl, allegedly abducted in Bhaderwah (Jammu), after being traced out, was handed over to her natural guardian as reported in a local paper of 24th October, 1967. What a contrast."* [88]

The pent up anger of the hopeless and suppressed Kashmir Hindus found an

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87. Kashmir Hindu Action Committee - Wail of the Vale, P.7.

88. Kashmir Hindu Action Committee, Wail of the Vale - P.40 expression in the form of non violent and peaceful agitation launched over the episode and the bungling made by the Government, demanding restoration of the girl to her destitude widow mother. A few thousand Hindus were indiscriminately arrested and detained in police lock ups and the Central jail Srinagar, under Defence of India Rules. Scores of Hindus were injured by the Police as well as by communal attacks instigated by the Government. Nine innocent Hindu youngmen had lost their lives at different places and on different dates either due to police brutality or due to the communal frenzy let loose upon the small Hindu minority. Not a single Muslim was killed in the whole agitation or arrested by the Government.

State Congress President, Syed Mir Qasim, deliberated upon the pros and cons of the Hindu agitation in the Congress meeting convened for the purpose. No suggestion for settling the matter was forthcoming or considered. Mir Qasim, however, asked for opinion on a suggestion, if the girl was for the time being, handed over to the custody of a third party. The sister of the Chief Minister Sadiq and a leader of the Congress Party Ms. Zainab Begam opposed it tooth and nail and stressed that the girl would continue to remain with her Muslim husband and that no alternation in that position should be effected.

The Congress ruling party and the Government treated Jammu & Kashmir as a Muslim State and did not bother for the Hindu minority scattered here and there. They, therefore, wanted to make Hindus aware of their "subservient position " and also of their being non-entities in the State. That is why Syed Mir Qasim while speaking on the episode in the Assembly, hurled an indirect warning to the Hindus and expressed that the State was not only Habbakadal (Srinagar) and Rajindera Bazar (Jammu). Mir Qasim alongwith two Muslim Congress Ministers played the main role in communalising the situation in Kashmir, fomenting trouble and retaining the girl with his abductor.

Mufti Azam of Kashmir, Bashir-ud-Din was also contacted by the ruling clique to enlist his suport in communalising the situation, upholding rowdyism and in defeating the Hindu interests. He made no secret about it and even publicly charged the Government for creating the trouble.

> *"Mufti Bashir-ud-Din, the head Mufti of Kashmir said at a meeting of Islamic scholars today that the responsibility for the recent incidents in Srinagar lay with the Government "in so far as it had been encouraging mischievous elements."* [89]

All the Hindu detenues arrested in connection with this episode were released from the jail on the basis of some fake agreement between the organisers of the agitation and the Government, in which the Government ditched the agitators and hurt the feelings of Hindus. The Government of India also played false to them.

One Madan Lal, also a detenue and set at liberty alongwith others, was

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89. The Indian Express, October 7, 1967.

however, recalled and stopped at the prison gate. As I was also released and was getting out, I enquired about the reason for Madan Lal's delay in release when all detenues except him were released. I came to know that the jail authorities had received just then a telephone message from the higher authorities directing them not to release him. I felt about this personal vendetta very much. The truth was that Madan Lal was a tenant in the shop of G.M. Sadiq in his building at Lal Chowk, Srinagar. Sadiq had filed a suit for ejectment against him in a Srinagar Court when he was out of power. Meanwhile Sadiq became Chief Minister but the suit had dragged on, being a civil litigation. To avenge upon Madan Lal, Sadiq found it opportune time to send him to jail without his fault, in connection with the Hindu agitation. He might have thought that no body would be able to notice the motive behind his detention. Except him every one of the detenues was released and he alone had to suffer a long imprisonment. While leaving the prison premises, I found on the face of Madan Lal the helplessness of Hindus of Kashmir and also an indication of intrigues afoot to wipe them out in Kashmir, whether Sadiq was at the helm of affairs or any one else".[90]

Pro-plebiscite and anti India elements were in collaboration with the Sadiq Government and his Congress Party in Kashmir. The cause of them all became a common one, to harass into submission the handful Hindu minority of Kashmir. The anti India elements against whom Police should have been ordinarily watchful and vigilant, had become the allies of Police to help implicate, harass, overawe and entrap the members of Hindu community on no ground and for no fault of theirs, in order to seek their total surrender and complete subjugation. Were the Kashmiri Hindus inferior citizens and inhabitants than the traitors and other anti India elements, having loyalties for other than India? To quote a personal experience :

Hindu agitation had subsided but discontent was still there. One morning two Sikh constables of Punjab Police entered our house (I was living then in the down town of Srinagar) and desired to have tea. They might have been on patrol duty. They were served tea. After finishing it, they requested for tea for their officer and a few other colleagues who were on duty near the bridge. My mother okayed and handed it over to the constables who refused to take it on the ground that that would entail disciplinary action for them and requested that the two children present there, should carry the tea and accompany them. Their request was accepted out of sheer hospitable Kashmiri nature. While coming back after serving the tea, the two boys

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[90]. Madan Lal was alive in Srinagar when I left last, but donot know his whereabouts now. He is a nationalist and anti communal and a freedom fighter. He is in Politics since 1935, when he was associated with Muslim Conference, then with National Conference and thereafter joined Congress Party, where he could not continue because of Sadiq. He was in no way connected with Hindu agitation. He had lost the ejectment suit and possession was taken from him since. He was still fighting the case by way of appeals etc. He is a hereditory "state subject" of Kashmir.

were attacked by some Muslim youngsters who damaged the pots, on the fault of having served tea to the personnel of Punjab Police. In some other areas even the Muslims used to entertain Madhya Pradesh and other Police personnel. to tea.

On the next day I went to the Court as usual. A professional colleague Mohamed Yaseen Sidiqi (A former Acting President of Plebiscite Front) told me in confidence that he heard about a complaint against me that I had served tea to Punjab Police. I took it lightly as the matter was trivial and told him if they had asked him for a cup of tea, he would have supplied the same to them out of courtesy. After a while, however, I received information that police was searching for me in the court to effect my arrest. It was confirmed and I managed to leave the Court premises secretly. I was not afraid of being arrested but I did not like to be arrested in connection with a matter that was sought to be given communal colour. The funny thing, however, was that the Sadiq Government treated the Kashmiri hospitality as an "offence" and wanted to re-arrest me as his collaborators might have wished so. I was Secretary of the State Praja Socialist Party then and wanted to apprise my Party headquarters of the situation before I offered myself for arrest and aligned with the movement. It was only to clear my conscience, otherwise I was not an appendage to anybody. I then went underground. But my youngest sister Shushila Kaul, surprisingly managed to contact of her own, on phone from Srinagar, my Party Central office and apprised them all about it. Surinder Mohan (National Joint Secretary of PSP as he then was) wrote a letter thereupon to the Union Home Minister Y.B. Chauhan about it. My arrest was not effected later.

Strangely enough, when I went from Srinagar to Sunderbani (Jammu) and I led a big procession there and forcibly captured the vacant government land after breaking its entrance, distributed this land among landless peasants on the spot in presence of a big Police contingent and Magistrate on duty. Although in connection with this "land grab" national movement of PSP, some other State Socialists including Achārya Nand Kumar Vaid, were already arrested and detained in jail, yet I was not arrested despite defying the law. But I was to be arrested at Srinagar on no ground except that, having born a Hindu there with human feelings and for providing a few cups of tea as courtesy, to some Sikh personnel of Punjab Police. This limited independence and discretion was also snatched implicitly and denied to me in Kashmir.

The local ruling Congress, with the secret support of other trouble shooters, fabricated and deseminated tales against the episode, maligned and exposed to danger Kashmiri Hindus and publicised unfounded facts in collaboration with the Government. They got a memorandum prepared in the name of "Respectable Muslim Citizens of Kashmir". based on lies and caused its presentation to the Union Home Minister Y.B. Chavan in Srinagar on September 2, 1967. The Memorandum titled "Real side of the Picture", was printed and circulated among Muslims in

Kashmir and sent out of Kashmir. It created a wave of resentment in Muslims against the Hindus. The Memorandum inter alia, said:

> *"The conversion to Islam and the marriage of a Kashmiri Pandit girl with a Muslim, is a very trivial matter in our normal life and could not and should not have caused conflagration.*
>
> *Why at all the Kashmiri Pandits should then have attached so much undue importance to this small incident? They have manoeuvred to get fabricated stories of the alleged atrocities committed against them publicised in the whole Indian press so as to enlist the sympathy of the Government and their co-religionists all over the country. The actual truth, however, is that they have spared no effort to wipe out the Muslim population by resorting to violence"*.

True, that conversion and marriage in normal course should not be taken any objection to, and such a matter should be treated as trivial. But where it is done with an ulterior motive and in a spirit of high handedness causing injustice or where it is done purely on political or communal considerations with Government assuming unfair and partisan role and becoming an interested party, with-holding justice to the aggrieved person, it cannot be deemed a normal act of fairness nor such an act can remain unnoticeable. In the instant case, the unpardonable act was involved. For the past many years now, the conversion and marriage of Hindu girls with Muslims have been welcomed and encouraged by Muslims with the tacit support of Government. They collect funds for them, help them and get them settled to a married life whereas an indigent Muslim on the street is not shown any sympathy. If such are the normal cases of conversion and marriage, why then the unconnected members of the Muslim community plunge into it, rejoice it and help it? Why then is it made an affair of the Muslim community? A Muslim youth from Benaras had taken out from Benaras some years ago, a Hindu girl named Miss Soni Singh. Apprehending legal action by girls' father in Benaras (Varanasi), he brought the girl to Srinagar. Police from Varanasi came to Srinagar and also the girl's father, to recover the girl. Members of the Muslim community collected money for them, arranged for their residence and also for their defence. The local Muslims fought for them. The father of the girl and the Police had to go back to Varanasi disappointed. Whatever the members of majority community do in Kashmir, that is all good and praise worthy. If the members of Hindu minority in Kashmir, raise a little finger fair and crave for justice, they are termed unjust and dangerous, given a bad name and crushed. How fantastic it is to charge a peaceful, non violent microscopic Hindu community with "efforts to wipe out the overwhelming Muslim population". It not only patently shows hollowness of the allegations, but also reveals something like evil designs entertained by them against the Hindus of Kashmir.

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91. Kashmir Hindu Action Committee. Wail of the Vale

"In the words of a Plebiscite member of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislature, there should have been nothing "what Pakistan could not achieve in Kashmir for 20 years, the misguided Chief Minister did it in 20 days." Communal Virus has permeated deep into the social veins". [91]

The memorandum of "Respectable Muslim citizens of Kashmir" reads further:

"It is unfortunate that the State Government have also suppressed many of the glaring activities of incendiarism, in which the Kashmiri Pandit community has engaged itself during the last two or three weeks or so. Huge stocks of arms and ammunition have been recovered from temples, houses and large truck-loads of armaments have been seized, but neither the Kashmir Radio nor the Information Department have had to say a word about the disclosures, although there is hardly any person in the State who is not in the know of the matter".

No ammunition was ever recovered from any temple nor any stock of arms was found in any place within the control or supervision of any Hindu, nor in fact, there was any such arms dump caused by the Hindus. It all was, therefore, a bundle of white lies. The Muslim majority and the Government went hand in glove in denying justice to the members of the Hindu minority of Kashmir. Had there been any semblance of truth in the allegations, some Muslims would have been killed by Hindus in retaliation or at least somewhere some Hindus would have put up some defence or resistance to the Muslim or Police onslaughts. How is it then only Hindus were injured and assassinated and not a single Muslm was touched by them? In effecting the wholesale arrests of Hindus in connection with the agitation, Kashmir Police hardly left any Hindu house where they had not broken jn and ransacked the entire house. Did they find in any house any armament? No armament of any type was found by the Police or by any other agency or any individual in any Hindu house or in any temple or in any other place connected with any Hindu. A Hindu house has even today only an ordinary type of small knife used as a kitchen ware and nothing else. The wild and reckless but dangerous allegations, of possessing and having dumped the arms, had not been only purposeful "disinformation" against Kashmiri Hindus but was also indicative of the deplorable future trend of events that the Muslims of Kashmir sought to shape. The campaign of disinformation against Hindus and India has therefore, been started long back. This false allegation of arms and ammunition ascribed to an admittedly and exceptionally non-violent and peaceful community, perhaps without a parallel in the world, could not even be conceived. Had it been a fact, no wholesale exodus of Kashmiri Pandits would have taken place from the Valley, leaving their life long homes and hearths there, without offering any resistance, while getting brutally killed at the hands of terrorists there. This is perhaps a solitary instance in the whole world that the terrorists (of the Muslim majority community) kill the members of (Hindu)minority easily and conveniently as the latter do not have even a stick to raise in self defence.

The shameful allegations aforesaid show what has been in reality up the sleeves of Muslims in Kashmir and their Governments and how they have been planning for harassing or killing of the Hindus and their forced migration from the Valley, an ancient land of their birth. The Muslim propagandists have seemingly surpassed even Dr. Goebelz's theory of speaking lies repeatedly to give it an appearance of truth. If the intentions of the Government were clear and had no complicity in the matter, why did it not take then any action against the printers and publishers of the memorandum under reference and against those who presented it to theUnion Ministers and other authorities as well as against the Plebiscite Front leaders, for levelling very serious charges but all false and unfounded, provoking Muslim sentiments, creating ill will and hate against the Hindu community of Kashmir?

Finally in the memorandum, the latent desire for Muslim State of Kashmir with full autonomy, if not complete independence, is given vent to, by couching this sentiment in meek words. The memorandum also says :

> *"We feel aggrieved both on account of the atrocities committed against us by Kashmiri Pandits as also on account of inhuman treatment meted out to us by the Police forces drawn from the Centre and the State".*

This has been the double faced politics of Kashmiri Muslim rulers and leaders. Atrocities were in fact, always perpetrated on Kashmiri Pandits. The entire community was maligned and false propaganda made against them, as they have always been considered representatives and agents of India and also a great hurdle in weaning away Kashmir from India. This small community had to pay for it invariably from its nose. The first stage was, they thought, to eliminate and wipe out Kashmiri Pandit community, from Kashmir, small though, but mentally sound. After this uphill task was done, their ultimate aim would no longer remain difficult to achieve. Feeble in numbers but robust in conviction, Kashmiri Pandits did survive because of their capacity and ingenuity. The leaders of overwhelming Muslim majority of the Valley, chose often to start a campaign of vilification against them in order to seek their extinction, merely on their vast numerical strength. And Government of India joined hands with the Muslims invariably to appease them which meant to eliminate Hindus and dug the grave for Indian interests in Kashmir.

I am constrained to quote another instance of collusion between Muslims and the Government, exposing Muslim communalism, repression, and harassment let loose on the members of the Hindu community so as to terrorize them into surrender and submission.

I went underground after I had left the Court when Police wanted to arrest me as mentioned earlier. My brother was already underground. One day in the month of October, 1967, it was given out falsely by some Muslims of the Mohalla that our mother had set afire the nearby mosque. How scandalous and baseless an allegation was levelled against a lady who all along believed in the piousness of shrines, temples and mosques? She would visit various important and selected-Muslim Shrines also to pay her respect and reverence. She had visited the shrine of famous Kashmir Sofi Saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (Nund Reshi as Hindus call him) at Chrar-i-Sharief where not a single Hindu lives. But she had never gone in her life to the small mosque. However Muslims from different Mohallas began to assemble within moments and large number of them entered the compound forcibly, demolishing a part of the compound wall.

They hurled abuses and started attacking the house and its occupants. It all seemed to have been pre-planned. The helpless and harassed inmates would have been finished within minutes. The height of ignoranace and communal sentiment is that even a close neighbour on the front side, Ghulam Rassol Wani, without rhyme and reason, also shouted as to why she had set the mosque on fire. Only some Hindu houses here and there, were left in the Mohalla. The conditions deteriorated within minutes and inflamed the atmosphere. But providence willed otherwise and exposed the myth of the false allegation which the lady of the house was charged with.

Meanwhile, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ghulam Rasool Dainposh (later retired as S.P.) residing near the vicinity also appeared on the scene, who was according to him walking by that side. He was trying to convince the swelling mob that the allegation against the lady was false. But the furious mob was not agreeing to him.

A while before, a journalist Tahir Muztir (who was lately Political Advisor to the erstwhile Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah) had dropped in, to enquire about the welfare of his friend Poshker Nath Koul Vakil (who also was not there as he had already gone underground). He was still talking with the inmates when this fabricated incident took an ugly turn. He turned to them and told this violent mob that the allegation against the lady was totally false as she was in the house and had not gone out. The furious mob did not agree. Giving his introduction, he said that he was himself a Muslim and recited "Kalima", then swore in the name of holy Quran that the allegation was false.

It unarmed the violent mob who began to disperse. The harassment and tension, however, persisted. But for Tahir 's presence, the occupants would have been no more. He stayed there and on phone contacted the then Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir, Anwar Karim, an IAS officer from Bihar and posted in Kashmir, to apprise him of the situation and seek protection for the inmates. The brazen faced Divisional Commissioner told Tahir that they were themselves responsible as they had played with the religious sentiments of the Muslims by attempting to set the mosque on fire. This shows how the Government authorities behaved irresponsibly and dangerously and how far from truth and misleading their statements used to be. Tahir retorted that he himself was and eye witness to the whole incident and they were all innocent and not only the charge levelled was false but the drama seemed to have been enacted with an oblique motive. The alleged and seemingly planned nominal fire was controlled at the very out set without causing any damage to the Mosque. Police ransacked residential house of Tahir Muztir, six kms away when he was still there and caused great harassment to his family.

The surprising contrast is that when we decided to leave that place a couple of years thereafter, the residents of the vicinity, Muslims particularly, requested and persuaded us for months, not to leave our Mohalla (Sehyar). The incident attributed to my mother was totally false and arranged with some deep rooted conspiracy which, however, didnot accomplish. Sehyar is situated in the Muslim belt and is sparsely resided by the Hindus as most of them had left the area after 1947, going out of the State. Both Hindus and Muslims felt concerned about our decision. The aforesaid Ghulam Rasool Wani also tried his best to have us stayed there and tried to persuade us by repeated requests to review our decision which we did not. The day we actually left, both Hindus and Muslims including Ghulam Rasool Wani, gave us a tearful adieu. They stood in rows on either side of the lanes in melancholy mood with eyes wet. Our throats were chocked, tears rolling down the cheeks and eyes cast down, unable even to acknowledge their "Salams". It was a historic scene of great communal harmony and amity which was only to be seen to be believed. Instances of this type can only be witnessed in that part of the globe. The soul of Kashmir cannot be deadened and crushed. The leaders may not be able to see or perceive it for some period due to their own limitations and shortcomings. But it is alive and glows in the humanistic attitudes and fraternal approaches of its people. It is the irresponsible politicians who wish this soul to be muzzled and covered by the layers of their black sheets of unworthy preachings, teachings and deeds.

In regard to Hindu agitation, the then Home Minister Y.B. Chavan and Information and Broadcasting Minister, I.K. Gujral visited Srinagar. They were fed with "information " based on total falsehood that was aimed at character assassination of Hindu community and weakening the link between Kashmir and rest of the country. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi also had adopted a hostile attitude towards Kashmiri Hindus and accorded a cold shoulder treatment to their delegations. The Ministers in general and the Union Government in special, gave tremendous set back to Kashmiri Hindus by siding with the oppressers and depressing the victims. They have automatically damaged the cause of India and not that of the agitators of Kashmir only, for which all such elements deserved indictment from the masses of India.

CHAPTER -XII

Politics on the anvil

Not that the ruling Congress and its government alone championed the cause of Muslims to the detriment and provocation of Kashmiri Hindus, but Plebiscite Front also echoed the same sentiments. The barrier of separatism between the two parties was nevertheless there, but the barrier of political antagonism and idealism was not there. Both the parties exhibited the same thought process. Their routes seemed different but destiny appeared the same. The reviewed statement on Kashmir issued by Plebiscite Front after deliberations on political situation in the State, in its special Convention held at Anantnag on 2nd October, 1967, unfolded the same line of thinking in both the Parties so far as the Hindus and Hindu Agitation was concerned. This statement inter alia, said:

> *"The apprehensions of Kashmiri Muslims that an organised scheme for ouster and elimination of Muslims of the state being put into operation, are getting stronger. The recent Hindu Agitation, started with a trivial incident, has by and by, assumed such a turn that it connotes to be a part of the same scheme, though it was an ordinary matter".*

The Plebiscite Front urged the Government to protect the Muslims of Kashmir as well as of Jammu, though it had no following worth the name in Jammu region. Not a word was, however, uttered by Congress, about the genuine apprehensions of and victimization suffered by Kashmiri Hindus. How fantastic was it to say that the Muslims in the State needed protection and not a handful of Hindus required it? The above statement further said:

> *"The poisonous aftermath of the recent agitation is still polluting the atmosphere. Cases of stabbing, stone pelting, vexatious rumours and arson are still taking place. The forces of law and order have become ineffective and communal virus has affected them. It can prove disastrous. We demand the Government to properly protect and safeguard the life, property, respect and honour of the Muslims and not to allow such elements to raise their head which might cause destruction and devastation and violate communal amity and harmony. This Convention of Plebiscite Front deeply feels that necessary and satisfactory measures need to be taken for protecting the life and property, respect and honour of the people, which may restore their confidence. Attention be immediately focussed on safeguarding Jammu minority, failing which the Government will be responsible for the dangerous consequences".*

Jammu Muslim minority was safe and not a single individual of this community, unlike Kashmir, was touched by the Government or the Hindu major ity. Even then the issue of Muslim minority of Jammu was raised by those who claimed to represent Kashmir but did not bother for the Hindu minority of the Valley. Does the harassment and elimination of Hindus from Kashmir constitute a protection for the Muslims? Was the survival of Hindus in Kashmir a threat to the wellbeing of the Muslims? If it was not so, why were then fake stories and unfounded apprehensions raised by the Muslim leadership ? This all appears to have been a camouflage to go alongwith the policies both, inimical to the growth of secular forces in the State as also to weaken the pro-India elements.

Merit has always been a casualty in Kashmir and communal considerations based on the proportion of the population have received preference. It has had become top policy matter with each and every Government. The Plebiscite Front laid emphasis on this aspect in the above statement, which further says:

> *"Recent agitation poses one more question which has attracted attention of the Plebiscite Front. This is the problem of communal representation on the basis of population for regulating recruitment in the State service, admission to the Colleges and other training institutions etc. In the opinion of the Front, monopoly of any one community over the Government offices is detrimental not only for the administration but is also in disparagement of other communities, as well as causes inferiority complex. The only remedy to overcome this is that every community be given representation in Government offices and institutions and in profit yielding works as per the strength of their population."*

The stand of the Plebiscite Front was obviously based on communal considerations and against the secular Constitution of the country as well as Kashmir's own Constitution , which do not admit of recruitments or admissions on religious considerations much less on the numerical strength of the communities. While expressing concern for the Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir, the Plebiscite Front never spoke a word of sympathy about the harassed and victimized Hindu minority in Kashmir. After the Accord, the Plebiscite Front merged with the resucitated National Conference in 1975 which was headed by Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. It was simply a change of form and not of substance. The Plebiscite Front accordingly survived in the National Conference alongwith the policies it had enunciated and pursued. There has always been and for all practical purposes, Muslim Government in the Sate after 1947, safeguarding, protecting and looking after Muslim interests even at the cost of Hindus. The Muslims and their organisations have still been clamouring and creating a suffocating atmosphere for the Hindus who have no one to protect, no one to hear their sobs and screams. How cruel then it is to impute motives to the Hindus for having endangered life, property and honour of Muslims, which they wanted to safeguard from imaginary onslaughts and attacks of Hindus? Kashmiri Hindus had kept all these sufferings behind the curtain,

CC-0. Kashmir Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh

which the terrorists have rent asunder wittingly and thus woes of Kashmiri Hindus began to come to the surface.

The Plebiscite Front, therefore, openly enunciated and followed the policy of communalism and communal representation which Kashmir Government had already adopted. This anti national, anti secular and discriminatory policy has been sought to be enforced against all "profitable works" as well. It means that the discrimination should persist beyond the services too. It brought within its ambit, for instance, the cases of admitting and registering the contractors with different branches of the government and in alloting contracts for construction, execution or supplies as well as in the matter of borrowing loans from the State Financial Corporation and Banking and other Institutions for setting up small, medium or major industries and similar other jobs and works. What a dangerous trend and tendency is divulged? Without making formal announcement to this effect, all the Governments of Kashmir, in fact adhered to and followed this policy, no matter whether it was the Government of National Conference, Plebiscite Front or Congress. It has shaken the pro India elements and their basis from its roots in Kashmir. The greatest sin of Hindus in Kashmir has been that they owe allegiance to India and they do not belong to Islamic faith. There lies the root cause of their troubles in Kashmir.

The Plebiscite Front regarded the "political impasse" as the main cause for various ills and reiterated its demands for plebiscite in the above said statement. The Front emphasized that plebiscite be held in the entire State of Jammu & Kashmir. The statement added:

> *"Political stalemate gives an upper hand to the intriguing elements. Under such conditions neither democracy functions well, nor human values foster, nor administration can improve, nor people's real representatives go to the Assembly, nor any citizen can lead an honourable life.*
>
> *In our opinion the only remedy of all these maladies is to determine the future of Azad Kashmir, Gilgit, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, i.e, all the districts and areas constituting the State prior to 1947, through free and fair plebiscite without any excuse and technicality".*[92]

Such conditions in Kashmir Valley were sought to be created as to imperil the existence of Hindu-Sikh minority and make their survival difficult. In the matters of recruitment to and promotions in the State services and admission to Medical and other technical Colleges, glaring instancers of injustice and discrimination were always found and prepetrated on the basis of religion. The Hindu, Sikh student community was particularly dejected and frustrated over this heart wrenching policy of the Government. Merit was converted into demerit and demerit into merit. How suicidal does it become for a student who feels himself or herself entitled to admission to an Engineering or Medical College, for instance, on the basis of merit but finds himself totally ignored and dropped on the basis of his or her religion ! The greatest infirmity for a Hindu Sikh student in Kashmir that he or she suffers from, is his or her religion. This brings the Hindu, Sikh youth either to the point of revolt against the authorities that be, or against the religion that he belongs to. For, it deprives him or her from the legitimate entitlement to education and snatches the right that otherwise vests in him/her. This compels the Hindu, Sikh youth to convert to Islam.

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[92] *This statement is in Urdu and the excerpts quoted above are its English translation .*

The hope entertained by Hindu/Sikh youth for benefits in future by renouncing his/her religion and by embracing Islam, serves as a bait to them. This was an allurement to helpless and frustrated young boys and girls against whom hostile atmosphere has been generated by both, the Government as well as the members of the Muslim majority. As such, for the past some time, overtly and covertly, regular conversion of members of the minority community to Islam, has been taking place which has been a completely one way traffic.

Under these compelling circumstances, many Hindu Sikh boys and girls had announced their decision of conversion to Islam in September, 1966. They made the public declaration severally and jointly and issued and pasted wall posters, mentioning their original Hindu names, giving out the substituted Muslim names they had adopted. These students included one Sikh, twenty Hindu boys and three Hindu girls and all belonged to Anantnag district. Commenting on this sad state of affairs Daily Pratap, New Delhi writes:

> *"It is said that such conditions are being created in Jammu & Kashmir which compel Hindus and Sikhs to renounce their religion. All India Dayanand Salvation Mission Hoshiarpur has received a letter from Maharajgunj, Srinagar that a Brahman girl is marrying a Muslim and in Anantnag one Sikh, twenty Hindus and three Hindu girls are embracing Islam. If somebody out of his own volition changes his religion not much objection can be put forth. But when the Government creates such conditions as to compel him to think that without renouncing his ancestral religion, he cannot get justice, is difficult to tolerate—The fact is that these boys and girls seek admission to Medical and Engineering Colleges. The Jammu and Kashmir Government has framed such rules and regulations which give preference to a Muslim with third class as against a Hindu with a first class. The result is that all these boys and girls do not see any way out for their admission except to renounce their own religion. Their only fault is that they are competent and have taken birth in Hindu families. As such, they are meted out this unfair treatment.*[93]

The Pratap also quoted the names of those Muslim boys and girls who have been preferred over the head of these students, despite having obtained far less marks than the aforesaid non Muslim boys and girls. Sadiq's attitude has not been appreciated and surprise has been expressed on this strange type of secularism. This newspaper further says:

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[93] *The Pratap, New Delhi, reproduced and translated from "Navjeevan", Srinagar, 1st October, 1966.*

> *"Sadiq Sahib in a care free mood is befooling Congressmen in Delhi. He has thought to present Kashmir before the world as an unparalleled example of secularism but the meaning of this secularism is to require Hindu boys and girls, to change their religion even for admission to Schools and Colleges. This is queer secularism. If at the time of admission to the Medical and Engineering Colleges the consideration of Hindu and Muslim also prevails, who can then hope that after completing the education, a doctor or an engineer coming before us, would be competent or not; how they can be trusted upon? Congress people are often repeating throughout India that the policy of English Government of communal admission on the basis of population, was being done away with , so as to encourage talented brains. But what is actually being done in practice, I have cited its example. I think nothing is worse than changing one's religion under duress. In that event the person only is disgraced. But what happens in Kashmir, that not only it disgraces these boys and girls, it will also endanger the lives of many, when the admitted students with inferior merit complete their courses".*[94]

It is not only a question of depriving the deserving candidates of one particular community, from recruitments in the State services and singling them out at the time of promotion or denying their children admission to the Medical and other technical Colleges, it has also tremendous bearing on the frame and development of the society and the consequent attitudes that might be adopted in future. It has direct impact on the politics of the country. In other words, it badly damages the health of the society and does not allow creation of conducive environs for growth of a healthy society. When the edifice of the society is founded on wrong basis and material, it is bound to crumble down and cannot withstand the vagaries of time. The contours of the society thus founded and developed, shall be communal tinged and the outlook of the members of this society, shall be non secular and sectarian and their functioning towards the country, shall be suffering from lack of loyalty. Let the masses of India themselves analyse and draw a conclusion as to what their Governments have been doing in Kashmir all these years. Whether they have been able to forge cohesion and whether the bonds of kinship have been made stronger or weakened? The present crises in Kashmir, however, shows that the Centre stands no where, indicating explicitly that its policies with respect to Kashmir, were and are based on wrong perceptions, the outcome also has to be wrong

From the very outset, Sadiq Government faced a dearth of legislators to

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94. This statement of the Plebiscite Front is in Urdu and quoted therefrom.

support him as mentioned in the preceding pages. He lacked the support of sizeable National Conference workers. Most of the workers were lost by him to the Democratic National Conference, whom the "Progressive Group" deserted without taking them into confidence when they had rejoined National Conference and were inducted in the Ministry. It was one of the main reasons that Sadiq had to convert National Conference into Congress. But to have some base, he had to woo some other elements, even the Plebscite Front men.

> *"Sadiq Government became anaemic and thus an anaemic Government started making efforts to get impure blood transfusion by entering into an alliance with Sheikh Abdullah who was released unconditionally along with his colleagues standing trial in Kashmir Conspiracy case. Infact this unholy alliance was neither a marriage of convenience nor an expediency as a convenient or expedient thing would have been to work for creating such conditions under which all the Nationalist Forces could unite so as to give a tooth and nail fight to the forces of secession. But on the other hand national interests were subordinated to personal interests. Sheikh's releae was followed by extension of State patronage to him to carry on a slanderous campaign against India".*[95]

The Sadiq Government rendered all help to the Plebiscite Front Convention that was held against India. This tacit encouragement to anti India forces had the natural effect of demoralizing the pro-India elements.

> *"For Plebiscite Convention in which a resolution challenging the irrevocability of State's accession with India and demanding plebiscite in Kashmir was passed, Sadiq Government rendered useful help to make it a success. Tentage for the Convention was supplied by the State Tawaza Department and Vehicles of the State Garages were requisitioned to carry the delegates from the various parts of the Valley. An important convertible car was sold to the Sheikh for less than eight thousand chips so that he would be in a position to undertake tours of Valley to organise Committees of Plebiscite Front with the utmost comfort and ease. Sheikh and Farooq's men are playing havoc but the Sadiq Government dare not take action against them. On the other hand all the Pro India forces in Valley who feel insecure because of hostile policy of the Government, have started thinking seriously in terms of migration from state to other parts of the country".*[96]

Kashmir presents a strange situation. When the leaders on pro India front want to gain power, they speak highly of India and plead for greater integration of Kashmir with India. They advocate deletion of Article 370 of the Constitution as

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95 & 96. Two facets of Sadiq Government, published by Bakshi's J. & K. National Conference Action Committee. Jammu.

well. But after they assume power, they begin to mark retreat and resile from the stand they had taken to make it a ladder to ascend the power. Sadiq had clarified his stand with regard to Article 370 when he was out of power. Bakshi's National Conference indicted the Sadiq Government in this regard:

> *"In other spheres, Sadiq Government has betrayed the people by backing out of the promises given to them . Before taking over the Prime Ministership, Sadiq was very much vociferous about the abrogation of Article 370, but immediately after he forgot about abrogation and started talking in terms of modifications and alternations and that too, after seeking advice from jurists".*[97]

Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq and Syed Mr. Qasim had called upon the Indian prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru in New Delhi and impressed upon him the need for establishing a unit of Indian National Congress in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. They had argued that already the branches of Jan Sangh and Praja Socialist Party were set up in Kashmir. They also emphasised the need for deletion of Article 370 as well.

During the course of his interview with the UNI, Sadiq threw light on his meeting with Nehru in October 1963. About abrogation of Article 370, Sadiq said:

> *"Need is imperative to create such conditions in Kashmir as would dispense with the necessity of Article 370. I am personally against retention of this Article as it is temporarily kept and meant merely for a transitory period. By virtue of this Article, Jammu & Kashmir has a right to legislate on Concurrent List of the Constitution".*[98]

The fourteen members of Jammu & Kashmir legislature presented a memorandum to the President of India against some alleged corrupt practices of the aforesaid progressive group which assumed power, alongwith their other ministerial colleagues. The memorandum brought to the notice of the President the *"gross acts of the abuse and misuse of their official position, power and authority committed by the Ministers of the present Cabinet, and Shri Mir Qasim, an ex-Minister".* The need for holding an inquiry into the matter was emphasised. The memorandum said.

> *"Being matters of definite public importance it is proper that a due inquiry be directed to be held under the Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952, into the allegations mentioned in this memorandum in order to ensure a cleaner administration, and so assuage lacerated public feelings. Needless to emphasise that your august self is the sole sheet anchor for saving the democracy in India and for cleaning the governmental machinery in this State in the interest of the country as a whole, more so at this time when*

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97. The "Hamdard" Srinagar, 29th October, 1963

98. Two facets of Sadiq Government.

> *public opinion in the State is greatly exercised ....*
> *The undersigned are staunch adherents of the integration of the State with India believing as they do that the state is inextricably an integral part of India. The undersigned also earnestly believe that if the abuse of power as referred heretofore is not inhibited at this time it may cause detriment to the Indian image herein".*[99]

This memorandum contained allegations against the Chief Minister G. M Sadiq, Syed Mir Qasim, D.P. Dhar, Trilochan Dutt, Ghulam Rasool Kar.

The signatories to the memorandum were:

Thakur Rounq Singh, Nizam-ud-Din, Raja Mohd. Afzal Khan, Abdul Majid Bandey, Mohd. Yahya Sidiqi, Wazir Paras Ram, Abdul Reham Bhatt, Noor-ud-Din Dar, Malik Abdul Ghani, Ghulam Mohd. Wani, Syed Ali Safvi, Master Ghulam Ahmed, Abdul Kabir Wani (Jailbaba) and Ghulam Hassan (All MLAs of the concerned period). In the postscript of the memorandum the "Syndicate" was regarded as a "business combine". The postscript reads:

> *"From a perusal of the allegations specified herein above, it should be clear that the syndicate comprising Messers G.M. Sadiq, Mir Qasim, D.P. Dhar, Trilochan Dutt, Ghulam Rasool Kar and others is as much a business combine with fantastic financial involvement as it is an association of a few political beings grouped together by the usual capitalist interest"*

No inquiry, however, was instituted. There have been some glaring instances of nepotism, favourtism and irregularities against Sadiq, still he was comparatively a man of integrety, a quality rarely found in the politicians and ministers. He commanded respect from the intelligentia.

Sadiq's move to convert National Conference into the unit of Indian National Congress was more actuated by the aim of giving a political set back to Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed who was haunting him and who had a sizable following in the Party. After conversion to Congress, Sadiq was to enjoy the direct patronage of New Delhi as against any other leader in the National Conference. On setting up of an official Congress in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, the Bakshi group, did not join it and maintained a separate party identity under the banner of National Conference.

The National Conference, however, acted and served as a pro-India opposition Party with Shyam Lal Sharaf as President and Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed as chief leader, while the Congress became the party in power. Without pro-India opposition, democracy in the State could not be fostered and strengthened, bonds between Kashmir and rest of the country could not take roots. In absence of strong, secular pro-India opposition a void in the politics was bound to occur and the genuine public grievances in the matter of day to day affairs, could not be properly ventilated and removed. I was always of the strong belief that unless a healthy opposition was formed and made to survive effectively in Kashmir, the political uncertainity over Kashmir would loom large

And then democracy does not survive properly in a monolithic party system. A political forum reflecting public grievances and complaints and opposing the despotic tendencies of the government, gives a measure of satisfaction to the people. In absence of such a political apparatus, the people had to go astray and took cover behind communal and anti India parties and re-opened issues like accession and raised slogans of a Muslim theocratic State (Nizame Mustafa). The channel of people 's grievances within the democratic framework had to find some out let and expression somewhere. But such a channel and outlet was plugged, blocked and destroyed. The public, in absence of a strong and effective opposition, could not draw other elements to its fold in order to help in the power tussle, had itself to fall prey to the secessionists, fundamentalists, destabilising forces and the parties nourished by them.

Obviously, therefore, thinking of discrediting and discouraging pro India secular opposition in Kashmir in the hope to consolidate pro India elements under one party flag and to build up only the ruling party, has been harmful, both to the interests of the people and cause of the country. The main factor being lack of honesty of conviction and sincerety of purpose in those who governed the destinies of the people in the State. The benefit of this political infirmity has ultimately gone to the extremist and secessionist forces which have thrived on this political lacuna created and maintained by the Central Government constantly in Kashmir. In other words, neither the State Government nor the Union Government ever wished for the growth of healthy politics in the State, may be unconsciously due to their party selfishness, political shortsightedness, lack of political vision as also lack of indepth knowledge of Kashmir and its people, their thinking, habits, traits of character. This has unwittingly contributed to the present crisis in Kashmir, the process of which had started long back, of course, short of terrorism which is added and made possible on a mass scale for the last a few years.

During the regime of G.M. Sadiq when Prime Minister Indra Gandhi visited Kashmir, she categorically stated that there was no need of National Conference in Kashmir. This did not indicate a healthy political sign. Socialists were able to foresee its repercussions and criticised this statement of Indra Gandhi. The then General Secretary of Praja Socialist party (PSP), Prem Bhasin, while addressing a public meeting at Lucknow, said:

> *"This smacked of dictatorship and would simply lead the people of Kashmir away from India and nearer to Pakistan as, once the people of Kashmir realised that they could not enjoy their democratic rights while integrating themselves with India, they would be disillusioned with their relationship with India and would prefer the dictatorial regime of Paki-*

stan in the absence of democracy, secularism and socialism in India. The statement of the Prime Minister had done the greatest harm to the cause of Kashmir's integration with India and was a portent of the dictatorial trends of the ruling Party". [100]

Continuing his speech, Bhasin deplored as to why Kashmir was not allowed to have opposition parties when other parties of the country had such parties. He further said:

"—Why Kashmir was not to have opposition parties when the rest of India had and when Kashmir had been declared to be a part of India and when the Constitution had guaranteed the right of democratic opposition in the Country? It was strange — that while opposition was allowed in Nagaland and change of government was permissible there although the Nagas were in league with Pakistan and China and getting military training and arms from Pakistan for raising rebellion in the State, the people of Kashmir were being denied the same rights although Kashmir had been integrated into India.—Why the Prime Minister wanted to protect a particular seat in Kashmir when Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed was a bigger Congressman and an older nationalist than Ghulam Mohamed sadiq". [101]

Strange thinking persisted in the Central Congress leadership about Kashmir. Jawaharlal Nehru was not happy over the formation of Democratic National Conference (DNC) in 1957, by left leaning "Progressive group", headed by Ghulam Mohamed Sadiq. Nehru wanted him to go back to National Conference. I supported DNC as against Bakshi and his National Conference, in the earnest desire to see growth of a strong, secular pro-India opposition party in the state. Myself being in the Praja Socialist Party, Girdhari Lal Dogra, one of the leaders of DNC, told me one day that I would be branded a communist as the DNC people were generally dubbed so. I replied that I never bothered about the labels and that I was above "isms" whenever welfare of the people and the interests of my country were involved.

Nehru's attitude then lent hope, succour and strength to Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and his Government. It dismayed Sadiq. When he wielded power and formed Congress unit in the State, Nehru's daughter - Prime Minister Indira Gandhi supported Sadiq and opposed Bakshi : I, again in my fervent desire to have some strong secular pro-India opposition party in the State, supported Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and his N.C.rather than Chief Minister Sadiq and his ruling Congress. I, therefore, arranged a grand political function at Srinagar which important leaders and activists of National Conference and respectable citizens graced, besides my own Party men. It was a reception arranged in honour of two Socialist leaders, Prem Bhasin and H.V. Kamath. At the outset, I spoke in the function and expressed the

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100. The "Pioneer" Lucknow, October 10, 1966

101. Ibid

need for strengthening pro-India opposition in Kashmir. I also said that out of that desire, I had arranged the meeting of the socialist leaders and leaders of National Conference in presence of respectable citizens and wished for a joint opposition front. The function was addressed by both these socialist leaders who assured Bakshi and his National Conference of their support in the fight for democracy. Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed also spoke and categorically announced that he and his Party must be regarded as part of P.S.P.and expressed hope to work unitedly for upholding democracy in Kashmir.

The policy of the Central Government has all along been to support one leader in a particular set of circumstances and to buck up another leader under other set of circumstances. The Central Government leaders were, therefore, keen about the leader and not about his party, which ever that was. That is why no secular, democratic and pro-India Party grew and spread on healthy lines in Kashmir. The party gives base and it was for the head of the State Government to search for this base or to create and form a new base of his own. The Union Government obviously, worked on somewhat an intermediary system in politics between New Delhi and Srinagar. The Centre would pick up a middle man, induct him to power and when he felt entrenched in power firmly, he would show his fangs to the Centre. In that eventuality, his rival was patted and the fate of the people was entrusted to another leader. This process started right from October 30,1947, when Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah was appointed as Head of the Administration over the head of a duly constituted legal administrative apparatus of the State Government and without waiting to make necessary change and amendment in the prevailing constitutional set up, the Sheikh was installed from above.

The Centre was, therefore, responsible for arbitrarily thrusting power upon him from above without conforming to ordinary norms, procedures and conventions; and the Sheikh was guilty of coming to power not through grass root channel but from above. It was from master to the masses through intermediatories and not to the master from masses without intermediatories. One who is competent to give power and confers the same, has innate power to withdraw it and to throw out of power, which Sheikh Abdullah was not intelligent enough to understand, and it took him 22 long years of his political wilderness to appreciate.

Right from Sheikh Abdullah, therefore, middle men used to be changed from time to time. It was not as such, liasion from people to people, nor display of democratic behaviour. This poltical intermediary system deteriorated into a mercenary system. And mercenaries blackmailed the Centre, which in turn often created tensions, some times more deeper and serious.

The Centre had, therefore, avoided direct contact with the masses nor allowed to grow and groom the elements which could work as a bulwark for the country in Kashmir, depending as it did, on the intermediatories. It tried, though many a time, to operate through the local unit of the ruling party, which, however, gave precedence to the party interests rather than upholding national interests in the complexity of the situation that pervaded this sensitive border State. The policy of Central Government to consolidate all the pro-India elements in the ruling party, proved an ill advised policy. That is why the Union Government interdicted, impliedly though, pro India opposition parties, from making headway, which could otherwise subserve the ends of the country. The Central Government had, therefore, assumed the role of opposition itself, causing at times, even a change over in the State Government at its own initiative rather than at the instance of the organised pro India opposition. It discredited the Centre, being simultaneously the patron of the outgoing rulers and also their incoming political adversaries. It took the blame in either case directly upon itself which might have been apportioned on the opposition. It created a barrier between Kashmir and the rest of the country. The net result was that the people of Kashmir were alienated from India by and by, instead of coming closer to her.

The Centre depended more on the capacity of the intermediatories than on the direct strength of the people, which could be done as the pro-India secular opposition never existed in Kashmir. This opposition was not afforded any opportunity and the facilities to grow and extend its tentacles. That is why Centre sometimes relied on Sheikh Abdullah, other times on Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and G.M. Sadiq and still on other times again on Sheikh Abdullah and transferred power to him sans his party in 1975. It left the people disappointed and disgruntled and the gap between Kashmir and India widened which could have been otherwise a gap between one pro India secular party and the other. The Centre could have, however, served as a bridge at the times of need and as and when the national interests so warranted.

It is not the fault of Central Government and the ruling party alone. The Indian opposition also suffered from the same vice and their role in Kashmir has been no less deplorable. They shamefully bypassed their own men in an attempt to woo the Congress and other mercenaries and suffered the same disappointments.

After Janata Party came to power in the Centre, the members of affiliated units of this Party in Kashmir, were hopelessly ignored and other elements who believed in political opportunism, were given preference and installed in Janata Party, whereas persons like me and others were totally neglected, and thrown out despite being members of National General Council of Janata Party by virtue of being delegates to our own former respective parties which formed the constituent unit of Janata Party. The people had begun to rally round the local leaders of the respective Units of the Central Janata Party in large numbers in Kashmir. By replacing Congress as a ruling party at the Centre, Janata Party attracted the masses in Kashmir who showed a tremendous enthusiasm to join this party. They had become wary of all the previous rulers and their parties and wanted a shift in the levers of power, aligned as such with rest of the country for the first time and wanted a change in Kashmir also. They eagerly awaited setting up of its unit in Kashmir. This was for the first time that mass involvement for an Indian Party had come to surface spontaneously. People were coming to me also expressing their willingness to join the Party. The same was the case with the local unit of Jana Singh, being one of the constituent units of Janata Party.

I and some of my colleagues had gone to Maulana Mohamed Syed Masoodi and invited him to join and lead Janata Party. He expressed his inability on the grounds of his old age and indifferent health but assured his full support in setting up and running Janata Party unit in Kashmir. But only some time after, he surprisingly accepted the chairmanship of State Janata Party. I had been to Delhi to discuss the matter with the central leaders. I found there a delegation of Jamaite Islami headed by Syed Ali Shah Gilani, waiting for General Secretary Surindra Mohan, who had not turned up at the appointed time. They left the Party office dejected and placed a word with me to tell him that they had come and left after waiting for long. I conveyed their message to Surindra Mohan when he came to the office. I do not know whether they met him or any other Janata leader later on. But I came to know subsequently that they were prepared to have some understanding or alliance with the Janata Party and were also prepared to fight the Assembly elections on its symbol. After Maulana Masoodi was appointed President of the State Unit of Janata Party, they felt ignored and dejected as the Maulana focussed all his attention on Moulvi Mohamed Farooq. Jamaite-Islami and Moulvi Farooq had no cordial relations and were on opposite poles politically.

I had met Asoka Mehta also in Delhi. He informed me that he would be visiting Srinagar and asked me to give him a list of some persons from Kashmir Valley whom I wanted to be considered for inclusion in the State Adhoc Committee. I furnished him some names there and then. After some time he visited Jammu and Srinagar along with Nanaji Deshmukh and Bhano Pratap Singh in connection with the formation of State Committee of Janata Party. Hundreds of persons met them in Srinagar. They met Maulana Masoodi who accepted their offer to head the Party but asked for a free hand and complete authority. When the list of State Committee members of Janata Party was announced, none from the constituent units of the Parties from Kashmir Valley, was figuring there as the the local leaders of these units were non-Muslims. The first thing to be done by Masoodi was to completely disown and discard me and others of the constituent units in Kashmir Valley against all hotch potch and opportunist elements that he brought in, to the Party in collaboration with central leaders, who have yet to read and learn the prime of Kashmir politics. There was a difference in approach between Mohi-ud-Din Karra and Maulana Masoodi. The former wanted to get alongwith the elements belonging to the parties of national mainstream, of which I was perhaps the oldest survivor in the the Valley, and the latter finished such elements at the very start. The entire leadership of the party went to Kashmir with more members on the Committee from the Valley though real base for the Party was more in Jammu region than in the Valley.

From Kashmir Valley, no non-Muslim was taken on the Committee of Janata Party. Prem Nath Bazaz was, however, imported from Delhi and made a member of the Committee against the Party constitution as he was not residing in Kashmir.[102]

Maulana Masoodi adhered to the policy of "derecognition"towards the Hindus of Kashmir, which had already started in Kashmir after fifties, which was wittingly or un wittingly supported by Central ruling parties. It was paving the way for alienation of Kashmir from rest of the country, a step at least in that direction. The non-Muslims in Kashmir were sought to be impressed upon that they had a small population in the Valley and, as such, they could not have any say in the matters of Kashmir, even if they had played a significant role. In other words, apathy was developed against them and they were made redundant. This constitutes the policy of "derecognition" of Hindus in the politics and other affairs of Kashmir.

In the Assembly elections also the local leadership of the party selected the candidates and wooed the electorate on unhealthy premises. The Party lost Habba Kadal (Srinagar) Assembly seat as the local Jan Sangh leader Tika Lal Tapilo was also disowned, thrown out and not appointed a member of the Committee. He was also not given a mandate on the ground that he was a Jan Sanghite. But I too was denied the mandate to fight election, though I am a life long socialist. It was a part of the double policy that the Kashmir Muslim Politicians have been adopting. Maulana Masoodi and other Muslims did not feel shy to join Janata Party, one of the important constituent of which was Jan Sangh, but they felt shy to own local unit of Jan Sangh and chose to maintain a distance from its leader and workers. Maulana Masoodi and other Muslims regarded Atal Behari Bajpai as their leader at national

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102. After communal riots of 1931 in Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Glancy Commission to enquire into the grievances of his subjects. Mr. Prem Nath Bazaz appeared before the Glancy Commission as representative of Kashmiri Pandits organissation, Yuvak Sabah. He finally agreed before the Commission, for according preferential treatment to Muslims over the Kashmiri Pandits. It created resentment in his community against him and Hindu Young men regarded it as a betrayal of trust on his part. Some of them, caught hold of him one day and maltreated him. They did a very unwholesome thing to him, agitated as they were. One of these young men was Mr. Prem Nath Raina. He wrote only a few years back about this reminiscence in the Martand, Srinagar. As such, since mid thirties Kashmir Hindus were mostly against Mr. Bazaz. Later, they became all the more against him for becoming a great protagonist of Pakistan from forties till sixtees when he fully settled down in Delhi. All along this intervening period, Mr. Bazaz had strongly pleaded for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

level but Tapiloo could not be their colleague on local level [103]

The Socialists in the Valley were treated as outcasts. It had demoralised their sympathisers and workers particularly Muslims, which had political disadvantage over the country. This deplorable trend was a portent of crisis to come. Nobody from a National Party had a chance of political survival in Kashmir Valley. This sense of despondency sealed the fate of all those affiliated to National Parties, resulting in banishing and finishing national politics from Kashmir. To elucidate it, this meant weaning away and isolating Kashmir from national mainstream, leaving chances and scope for claiming separation of Kashmir from rest of India, some day in the future.

The height of the things was that under the instructions of Maulana Masoodi, a letter was circulated by Mohamad Amin Nehvi (a party functionary) to various Managing Committees of Temples and other Hindu shrines to send the name of one common representative of Kashmiri Hindus who could be appointed on the committee of State Janata Party. Once the local leadership of the national parties were required to approach Masoodi through temple committees to seek admission to the Party, the nationlist element in Kashmir was patently discounted and secularism sought to be buried deep. It was an indication to wind up the parties of national mainstream in Kashmir and had an effect of dividing the people further into Hindus and Muslims. It was a great surprise to persons like me, who had staked their lives to nationalism, secularism and politics of Indian mainstream but had to get name recommended through local temple and shrine committees. It negated the entire concept of nationalism, socialism and secularism. It makes no difference to the Parties in the Centre which do not give good account of their perception about Kashmir. Was it a service to people or dis-service to them as well as the country? These were the cosmopolitan rays that Kashmir had been emiting.

I had, however, prophesied in my letter written to the Party President and other leaders that all those in the Janata Party from Kashmir would desert it in future and persons like myself alone would remain there where we were and actually that happened. Party was totally routed in elections, despite the leadership of stalwarts and the lacs of rupees received by the local party leadership from the Centre. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra might have perhaps provided effective leadership. He had also created a strong nucleas even before the Party unit was set up. The first public meeting held by him at Lal Chowk, Srinagar was a grand success, which was addressed by him, myself and others. But Janata Party was not to serve cause of the country in Kashmir, nor its leadership contributed for growth of healthy politics in Kashmir. They wished to convert it into another Muslim Party run by pampered Muslim leadership. How then the secular thinking and behaviour could be inculcated and developed among the political activists and general masses.

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103. Mr. Tika Lal Tapiloo was shot dead by the Muslim militants in Srinagar on September13, 1989.

During Opposition Conclave, the same tendency and trend was experienced. Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, had forced an untenable alliance with the opposition Parties in the country. But in Kashmir, he would ignore the local units of the opposition conclave. Kashmir leaders may like to poke their nose in Indian politics but so far as Kashmir is concerned, they would not allow them to interfere and prefer maintaining distance and separatism. The local leadership of the units was not taken at all into confidence and was treated as nonest. For, their recognition as the local units of the national parties, would signify that Kashmir was not separate from national mainstream which neither local authorities nor the local Muslim leadership were prepared to accept. With the exception of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed, this tendency is present in every Muslim leader here.

Accordingly, therefore, when the opposition conclave was held in Srinagar, none of the local units of the respective parties was invited to this concalve. The Central leaders of these parties visited Srinagar brazen facedly, without any qualms of conscience, participated in the conclave to the exclusion of their local leadership which goes against the spirit and concept of national parties and helps boosting up of regional parties and politics. The opposition leaders in the country are far weaker than the Congress leadership. Their leadership is localised and they want to maintain it. They have apparently more interest in their local politics and party unit than to have a clear vision about national party and politics and its essentials. It was better for national parties to wind up the local units, and the local Muslim leadership and rulers are very eager to see their closure. It shows the trend in Kashmir politics beneath the surface, which has unmasked its ugly face for the last some years.

Maulana Masoodi

CHAPTER : XIII

Political somersaults

Did the attempt for "liberalisation" and "democratisation" really serve the ends of people ? Did it dispel political uncertainty and ease the situation in Kashmir? Did it bring about any change for the better in the mind of Sheikh Abdullah and in the outlook of Plebiscite Front? If it did succeed in improving the conditions and bring about the requisite change, the new Government policy was worthwhile and appreciable and the measures of repression taken in whatsoever form and under whatsoever conditions, were then wholly unjustified, and could be regarded as demonstrations of high-handedness and despotic acts of State power. And if it did not succeed in bringing about the desired change and improving the conditions, then the policy of liberalisation and democratisation only helped release anti national, anti democratic and anti people forces, being incompatible with the interests of the country. This policy was then unwarranted as it was non conducive, leaving hardly any choice for the State Government *"but to come down heavily upon the persons and parties imperiling the unity of nation and integrity of the country"*.

Sheikh Abdullah appeared to have made no rethinking on the stand he had taken, entailing his dismissal and arrest on August 9, 1953. Little did he realise that the foreign aid he wanted to have for Kashmir, prior to his arrest was to barter away the freedom of Kashmir and to deprive its people, forming an inalienable part of the world's largest democratic nation as they do, from the valuable citizenship rights. Neither were Kashmiris a chattel nor Kashmir a commodity that he would always take the liberty of striking a deal about it, without any objection, hindrance and even a serious confrontation from the concerned quarters. The fate of the people and of the country is decided once in her long years of history and not determined off and on, on the basis of day to day affairs of the State.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed had condemned the tendency of seeking foreign aid which was one of the considerations weighing with Sheikh Abdullah, leading him astray. While speaking in the Assembly, Bakshi told the members:

> *"It is far better to get help from one's own brethren than seek it from foreign countries........If I have to beg for help at the door of Shri Nehru and his colleagues I will do so but I shall never seek help from a foreign country at the cost of my country's freedom."*[104]

The Sheikh's dismissal and arrest was, according to Sheikh Abdullah himself, "murder of democracy". But he never realised that his change of stand on "Accession" amounted to murder of the nation. He complained about it in a letter dated 16th, August, 1956, written from Sub-Jail, Kud to G. M. Sadiq, President Constituent Assembly and inter alia, said:

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[104] *The Kashmir Post, Jammu, March 29, 1954.*

> *"With the coup of 9th, August, 1953, the first act of the murder of democracy was committed, when I was unconstitutionally and illegally removed from Premiership and simultaneously arrested and detained. This arbitrary removal from the office of the leader of the House without formal vote of no-confidence, is without a parallel in democracy; and spontaneous mass protest from every nook and corner of Kashmir, have registered an unequivocal condemnation against it."* [105]

His deposition and arrest was illegal if the occurrence were to take place in the normal course of things. But he had changed his loyalty and so could not take the refuge under the norms and principles of democracy. He wrote further in his communication:

> *"Of late a good deal of evidence has come to light which establishes beyond doubt that the 9th August coup was the result of a deep conspiracy with communal and reactionary elements and other vested interests with whom the Bakshi clique joined hands in order to sabotage the great movement of which I have been the spear head since 1931."* [106]

The commitment made and stand taken by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, whatever the circumstances, was kept intact by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his colleagues which necessitated them to dislodge the Sheikh from power and even to imprison him. If it was a conspiracy in collusion "*with communal and reactionary elements*", then the Sheikh has himself been a great conspirator and traitor. He himself supported the Maharaja's Accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with India; he himself requested Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru to send the army to Kashmir immediately and to save Kashmir when he had in person gone to Delhi for this purpose. It was him again, who in a mammoth public meeting held at historic Lal Chowk, Srinagar, shook hands with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on latter's first visit to Kashmir after "Accession" and assured him publicly that Kashmir was a part of India and India was his country and the country of all Kashmiris.

It were his "doings" that Bakshi and others were following and pursuing to a logical end. Neither the question of conspiracy had arisen, nor of the collusion with communal and reactionary forces. Yes, changed loyalty and vacillating stance of Sheikh Abdullah, in collusion with foreign powers was in fact, a communal and reactionary stand adopted by the Sheikh, which invoked wrath of the nation; by exploiting religious sentiments of his co-religionists in Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah would always feel it convenient to change his approach and stand, to suit his personal ambitions and interests. But on a fundamental issue like "Accession" he could not have the usual smooth sailing and was apt to face stiff resistance.

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[105] *Sheikh Abdullah - Sadiq Correspondence, August-October 1956.*

[106] *Ibid.*

After Accession of Kashmir to India, Kashmiris are as free as other citizens of India are. What the Sheikh strived for, during the Maharaja's regime and what the people could at the most aspire for, was "*Responsible Government under the aegis of Maharaja.*" The rights, privileges and freedom that a Kashmiri enjoys since Accession to India, is far more than what he had aspired for. He is a free citizen of a free country. The quantum of freedom that a citizen in India enjoys is not in the lot of citizens of many independent countries in the world, who may genuinely be envying, at least in this regard, the people of this country. The dismissal and arrest of Sheikh Abdullah was, therefore, a natural corollary of his shifted loyalty and stand and not a result of any conspiracy. It was to preserve the commitment, to uphold the stand and to maintain the credibility of Kashmiris, which Sheikh Abdullah sought to tarnish and demolish. His political somersaults were exposing them before the world as people without resolution. It was to defy this epithet that the Sheikh was gaining for his people, conscientiously or unconscientiously. He turned his back to the public commitments made to Prime Minister of India, Nehru, to the people of India and to the entire world. He, as a citizen of India, hailing from Kashmir, was privileged to attend and participate along with other party colleagues in the sittings of Constituent Assembly of India, as member representative of Kashmir. The Constitution of the country thus framed and adopted, admitted and accepted Kashmir as part of India and the golden book of Indian Constitution stands signed by Sheikh Abdullah as a token of acknowledgement of all that it incorporates. Even then he had the audacity for his personal ends and ambitions to resile and resile totally from all this, which an ordinary prudent man would not do. He had sufficient time in prison to think over his fallacy and to come round. But he continued to harp on the tune of plebiscite whenever he was set free. UNI reported about the Sheikh's views :

> *"..any solution proposed for the Kashmir problem would have to be ratified by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.*
> *The Sheikh said he was misunderstood when it was reported that he had offered to accept a negotiated settlement in case holding of a plebiscite was difficult. There can be no compromise on the issue of plebiscite.*
> *.....The Sheikh said, he will not be a party to any solution which robs Kashmiris of their "inherent rights".*
> *Replying to questions about his challenge to the Chief Minister, Mr Sadiq, and his counter challenges about elections, the Sheikh said there was no question of his participation in any elections where accession to India has to be taken for granted. He was, however, prepared to fight*

> *elections on the issue of accession and get the people's mandate."* [107]

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah did not make any amends in his ambitious plan of Independent Kashmir, notwithstanding his long incarceration. The Maharaja had gone but the tendency and the spirit of autocracy was imbibed by Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah. He wanted to establish his "sultanate" in Kashmir. He wanted to have, therefore, Kashmir alienated from rest of the country. On"Independent Kashmir" he spelt out his views during the course of an exclusive interview given to the Daily Telegraph, London and published by the Hindustan Times. The Hindustan Times wrote:

> *"Sheikh Abdullah has proposed United Nations control over the Kashmir Valley for five years. The people should then be allowed to opt for India, Pakistan or independence.*
>
> *..........he Sheikh spelt out his views for the first time since his release last January.*
>
> *Apparently he was stung by a remark by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Srinagar last week end. She said then she had no intention of reopening talks with the Sheikh as he was "unable to make up his mind."*
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> *The Sheikh countered that the Government had failed to produce a policy "apart from one of drift." It is too divided to reach a decision.*
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> *....... he came out strongly in favour of the 1953 United Nations plan drawn up by Sir Owen Dixon, under which the predominantly Hindu area of Jammu would have internal autonomy within India. Under the plan, Pakistan would be asked to grant similar self Government to Azad Kashmir which she has occupied since 1948. The "doubtful" sector, the rich Valley, which both India and Pakistan prize so highly, would be placed under United Nations administration, though with the right to run its own internal affairs.*
>
> *Let all three develop over a five year period with free elections for National Assemblies, the Sheikh urged: Then let the Valley choose - whether to continue as before or decide between India, Pakistan or independence. If independence was the choice, both Jammu and Kashmir should have the right either to join the new sovereign State or to merge fully with India, on the one hand and Pakistan on the other."* [108]

In case the Sheikh was prompted by Kashmiri nationalism to put forth this solution of Kashmir tangle, it was understandable, though not permissible and practicable. The needles of the clock cannot be reversed. But it was not so either. In the Valley of Kashmir, the original residents-Kashmiri Pandits are also there. Their ancestors have been inhabiting the Valley from time immemorial. It was not,

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107. The Indian Express, 14th April, 1968.

108. The Hindustan Times, June 20, 1968.

therefore, fair nor proper to bypass them, though in minority, and pursue the formula. The vacillating attitude of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah clarified that he was assuming the role of sole and the only representative of all Kashmiris and was not prepared to take them into confidence as a nationality, if ever they constituted one. The Sheikh wanted to work for Islamic solidarity. As such, in making varying demands from the beginning, he never designed to work for Kashmiris as such, but for Kashmiri Muslims, which was nothing but exploitation of their religious sentiments. The idea of Islamic solidarity ousted and discarded the concept of Kashmiri nationalism. The plan of Sheikh Abdullah had, therefore, neither head nor tail. In this view of the matter, it was better for Sheikh Abdullah to shun the idea of Islamic solidarity and to work for the people's upliftment within India.

I had suggested to the Sheikh in one of my statements, to give up the idea of Islamic solidarity and come forward to lead the masses. The statement issued as State Secretary of PSP, reads as covered by the press:

> *"Sheikh Abdullah's present stand was confused and confounding and it did not become him to go back on his erstwhile avowed pronouncements. He urged the Sheikh to accept the reality and finality of accession and come to serve the common man by fighting maladministration, rising costs of living and growing unemployment in co-operation with the secular and democratic forces of the country instead of thinking in terms of Islamic solidarity.*
>
> *He said his Party will wholeheartedly co-operate with the Sheikh in this struggle as a component and inseparable part of the body politic of India. Let him act and lead and we shall follow."* [109]

Jawaharlal Nehru had a soft corner for Sheikh Abdullah and, as such, tolerated his anti national activities. It is not correct to think or say that he was totally unaware of the Sheikh's real nature, his thinking, bend of mind, attitude and communal passion. In a Cabinet meeting, Nehru hinted and disclosed his assessment about the Sheikh :

> *"Then suddenly to our utter surprise Pandit Nehru started talking bitterly against Sheikh Abdullah's communalism. He traced the Sheikh's history from 1930 onwards and mentioned how he had started his career with the Muslim Conference, which was an out and out communal organisation. He said that as a result of pressures from outside and seeing the development of the State's people's movement in the rest of India and for purely tactical reasons and probably under the advice of some of his more liberal followers, the Sheikh had converted the Muslim Conference into the political(National) Conference to give it a non-communal appearance. At this time Pandit Nehru suddenly looked at me and inquired whether I*

109. *Hindustan Times, May 18, 1968.*

had not come across some information of possible British connivance in that movement. I replied in the affirmative.

He continued his talk against the Sheikh and mentioned all his communal activities throughout the period he had acted as the National Conference leader. It was the Pakistani aggression which had mellowed him a little for a short time, because the tribesmen had committed gruesome atrocities on the Muslim population in the Valley.

But as soon as he (the Sheikh) became Prime Minister, he came out in his true colours once again and started his anti-Hindu activities. In contrast, he praised Bakshi and Sadiq for their completely non-communal outlook and said that these two were really secular-minded persons who required all support from India.

Pandit Nehru said that all the trouble in Kashmir was due to the Sheikh's communal outlook and it was he who was not allowing the State to settle down to peace and stability."[110]

Sheikh Abdullah proposed to go abroad and had applied to the Government of India for issue of Passport. He showed his nationality not as an Indian but as a "Kashmiri Muslim" in his application form. The person who did not agree to be an Indian national, should naturally disclaim the rights of a citizen. The Government of India, however, issued a passport in his favour. It naturally posed a question: whether Sheikh Abdullah was a rebel or a traitor having committed treason or acts of disloyalty? Or was he a remorseful Indian nationalist?

Unless the political status of Sheikh Abdullah was determined, decided and settled, no fair and proper solution of the troubles and turmoils of Kashmir could be found nor could he have been punished or absolved simply at the whim and caprice of Central or State Government. The uncertain and wavering attitudes of the Government, however, showed its indulgence and were giving wrong impressions thus adding to the uncertainty. His actions, utterances and attitudes, no doubt, had been as vacillating as they had been unpredictable. Sometimes he acted as a rebel, other times he appeared to be a traitor and at times he was a very apologetic nationalist. If he was free of guilt, he was not to be blamed and made to suffer. If he was guilty, then he ought to have been punished in accordance with the nature and seriousness of his guilt. The withdrawal of conspiracy case against him and his colleagues and setting him at liberty, had to be viewed from this angle. The declaration of Chief Minister G. M. Sadiq that he would fight him out politically, could have been a statement from a political party but not from the head of the Government. Otherwise, the inference drawn by general masses in Kashmir was that the Sheikh was innocent and the charges against him were untenable. No attempt was ever made to educate the masses about the real situation.

110. B.N. Mullick, "My days with Nehru", reproduced from Indian Express, 21st June 1971.

Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah at N. C. headquarters (Mujahid Manzil, Srinagar) told his gathering once that he would not like to die in "slave Kashmir". He would draw up a will and bequeath his sons that on his death, his body should not be buried in Kashmir but thrown to the waves of Arabian sea. No such testatory disposal of his body, however, was there, except that he had selected a beautiful piece of land on the bank of Dal Lake at Hazratbal for burial on his death. He was feeding the people purely on sentiments unrelated to facts. It is an irony of fate that a person who fought all his life for Kashmir like a hero with all popularity and when dead and buried, his grave should be guarded by the security personnel for fear of any indecent act being done to it. The graves of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamed and G. M. Sadiq whom the Sheikh had "accused" of having betrayed him and the Kashmiri people, have not been guarded by the security personnel like this, nor need for the same had arisen. It is to be unfair and ungrateful to ignore Sheikh Abdullah's role and struggle.

N.G. Goray while speaking at a public meeting at Jammu, referred to anti national activities of Sheikh Abdullah and the leniency shown to him. He said: "*Had he (Sheikh Abdullah) been in Pakistan, he would have been executed long back.*"[111] The Government of India always displayed its weakness either for Sheikh Abdullah or for his misconceived Kashmir policy. The result of India Pakistan war in 1971, was the birth of a new independent country, Bangla Desh, formerly known as East Pakistan. It had a great impact on Kashmir politics. Sheikh Abdullah took stock of things in the light of the new development that occurred in the sub-continent. He was moved enough to have his erstwhile stand on Kashmir reviewed. He saw remote chances for success of his plans as Pakistan surrendered to India in this war with over ninety thousand army men stationed in "East Pakistan".

To undo the Accession was not so easy a matter as Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues might have thought it to be. They, however, realised it by and by. The Sheikh had discussed the matter earlier also around sixties with Ghulam Mohi-Id-Din Karra and some of his close colleagues. One alternative which was seriously considered was of seeking help for "independence" from C. Rajgopal Acharya and his Swatantra Party. C. Rajgopal was a liberal politician and was not allegedly averse to granting of right of self determination to Kashmir, if no other solution was forthcoming or acceptable to Kashmiris. Living in the south, he was not bothered so much about the extreme north of India - Kashmir. The planning of protagonists of right of self determination was to arrive at an understanding with Swatantra Party on reciprocate basis. It was planned by the pro self-determination leaders to help Swatantra Party in elections to Parliament.

They proposed to tour throughout India and put their entire weight in favour

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[111]. Mr. N.G. Goray was Chairman of Praja Socialist Party when he delivered his speech at Gulab Bhawan Jammu in 1970.

of Swatantra Party, trying their utmost to persuade the Muslim electorate in India to vote enblock for his Party. This would give, they were convinced, an edge to the Swatantra Party over Congress and other parties. In case the party came out successful in the election and formed the Government, it had to grant the right of self determination to Kashmiris. If it were not in a position to form the Government, then it had to support the demand for right of self determination and help create Indian public opinion in favour of it. These leaders were mostly put behind the bars, as such their plans fell through. Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues, under the compulsions of time, came out from the rut of plebiscite. He wanted no longer to cry over split milk in the National Assembly during the five day debate on "Simla agreement".

Pakistan President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's statement that the fight for the Kashmiri's right of self determination was lost in 1948, had dampened the spirit of Sheikh Abdullah. Bhutto was himself unnerved after loss of "East Pakistan" and formation of Bangla Desh. Apparently he was not prepared to take any further risks by involving Pakistan directly in Kashmir. This statement gave a severe blow to Sheikh Abdullah and other Kashmiri politicians demanding or sympathising, overtly or covertly, with the slogan of self determination. The Sheikh commenting on Bhutto's statement said :

> *"Mr Bhutto's statement as reported in the Indian Press is not clear to me ....It is a historical truth which had been amply proved that any country which has depended on other powers for the achievement of its objective has always met with disaster.........*
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> *It is very difficult to understand Mr. Bhutto's point that the fight for the right of self determination was virtually lost in 1948."* [112]

Despondency overtook Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues; they relented. They thought it better to arrive at some understanding with the Government of India. The Sheikh was prepared to come round and have a dialogue on the extent of Kashmir's accession with India.

Syed Mir Qasim had assumed the stewardship of the State in December, 1971. He encouraged Jammait-e-Islami to come up. In the Assembly election that ensued, as many as five members of Jammaite Islami were elected to the State Assembly with his connivance. It was for the first time in the post independence history that an opposition party as weak as Jammaite Islami as it then was, had won five Assembly seats in the Valley. The loss of these five Assembly seats was to Congress.[113] This is how Muslim fundamental politics was introduced and penetrated into the public life in the Valley. Congress apart, the other pro-India elements also fought and lost as they did not enjoy direct or indirect Government patronage.

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[112] *The Indian Express, July 19, 1972.*

[113] *Late Mr.Sadiq's close relation and Congressman Kh. Abdul Ahad Burza was also defeated. Chief Minister Mr. Qasim wanted to let down his men, so his blessings were with the Jamait.*

This is where the policy of "liberalisation" and "democratisation" led Kashmir to. Was this policy aimed at discouraging the pro-India elements and boosting up communal and secessionist elements ? Was it really a policy of liberalisation with honesty or was it a policy of "escapism"? It is left for the reader to adjudge. Plebiscite Front had also reviewed its earlier policy of "boycott" of elections. It had decided to take part in the elections which had caused restlessness in the ruling party. Mir Qasim was, therefore, willing to enlist the support of Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front. [114] He was even willing to step down and accommodate Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues, which he ultimately did. This also raised a question as to whether this was the result purely of "escapism" from shouldering the organisational and government responsibilities in face of mounting communal and anti India opposition or was it a calculated move to transfer power to Sheikh Abdullah and other such elements designed to losen the grip of India over Kashmir.

As a result of the Accord between Sheikh Abdullah and the Government of India, Syed Mir Qasim stepped down and the Sheikh again assumed reins of power in February, 1975, after long twenty two years of political wilderness. It was the ingenuity and popularity of Sheikh Abdullah that he could reconcile two diametrically opposite political stands - Plebiscite for "independence of Kashmir" and willing "Accession to India". When the Accord was being finalised, masses in Kashmir chanted *"Yeh kareh teh kareh Bab kareh Bab kareh"* (Whatever the Sheikh wants to do, he may do it with full authority) and *"Alleh kareh wangan kareh Bab kareh Bab kareh" (The Sheikh may decide our fate in any manner he likes, that is fully acceptable to us)*. After Sheikh Abdullah assumed power in pursuance to the Accord the people rejoiced it.

Witnessing those scenes, it amply manifested that Kashmiris were in favour of Kashmir's Accession to India and their powerful and popular leader, Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah put a final seal of willing endorsement on the decision taken in 1947. The Accession, was otherwise also settled. It remained no issue before any section of the people. This chapter was closed for all times to come. On his death, Sheikh Abdullah was wrapped in the Indian tricolour and given a State funeral which was attended by lakhs of people, mourning the sad demise of their departed leader. This was an unparalleled funeral in the history of the State. Sheikh Abdullah appeared as one of the tallest Indians and the great funeral he attracted, left an indelible impression in the pages of history that he lived as the most popular leader and departed as a great Indian stalwart. But all was not so simple and smooth, many a thing, even unpleasant, were readable between the lines.

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[114] This hardly left any scope for political survival of pro-India and nationalist elements including sufferers of social boycott, whose spirits were obviously dampened.

Syed Mir Qasim termed this transfer of power to Sheikh Abdullah as a new deal for the people of the State. He wrote in his letter about it to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on June 6, 1983:

> *"It is no secret that as co-author of the 'New Deal' for the people of the State, I emphasised the urgent need for the initiation of a dialogue with Sheikh Sahib, however protracted and time-consuming the process might prove to be. I was not oblivious to the hurdles that would come in the way of achieving the desired results.—— your unreserved endorsement of my line of thinking and in fact, your sustained personal interest in the matter encouraged me to proceed ahead in the direction of establishing a rapport with Sheikh Sahib.*
>
> *This is an undisputable fact. It is also a fact that sceptism and doubts regarding the feasibility of our approach were openly expressed by quarters too well known to you to need any elucidation. Pandit ji's behests were fulfilled in 1975, when I voluntarily stepped down from the office of Chief Ministership and Sheikh Sahib assumed the leadership of the Government in the State.*
>
> *It is an irrefutable fact that a particular section in the State unit of the Congress (I) found it difficult to reconcile to the new situation. This section wanted to cling to power and had, most probably, never visualised the possibility of the development of a situation that demanded parting with the seats of power in favour of others in the broader national interests."*[115]

On July 2, 1983, Indira Gandhi replied this letter of Mir Qasim and alleged to have been misled. She held him responsible for virtually finishing the Congress party in the State. She replied :

> *".......For the present it is sufficient to recall that you misled me and the Congress Party about the nature of your talks with Sheikh Sahib. What had been proposed of a broad-based unity of secular and democratic forces in Jammu and Kashmir, of which the Congress was undoubtedly a major representative, turned out to be a patched-up settlement which left the Congress without any significant representation in the Cabinet and virtually led to the exit of our Party from the Jammu and Kashmir political scene, where it played a special role in upholding the basic values of the Naya Kashmir movement. For me the Accord was, and remains, a method of fruitful co-operation among all the secular and patriotic forces in the State. It certainly did not mean that the Congress should fade into oblivion. I did not and cannot accept this interpretation of the Accord. But this seems to be your view. What was worse was that you succeeded in persuading Sheikh Sahib and later Dr. Farooq Abdullah to accept your*

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[115] *Qasim-Indira Correspondence.*

> *version. This is the root of the trouble that developed between us and the National Conference. This is what lay behind the National Conference arrogance of power.........*
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> *........At this critical juncture in our history, when international forces are working for the destabilisation of India— and you admit and you are not unaware of these facts—was it not incumbent on all Congress workers to work selflessly to fight all forces that are against the secular and democratic unity of our country? Would we have carried any credibility had we done what you prompted us to do i.e., abandon the battle* in the Valley ? By surrendering to those who had no compunction in aligning themselves with communal and other divisive elements, we would not have served the cause of secularism."[116]

Sharp differences with the politics of Indira Gandhi that one had, yet it may be stated that she had developed, though very late, somewhat a clear concept about the situation in Kashmir only after undergoing a long ordeal of experience. She was convinced in the last days of her life that any local or regional party with independent local leadership in Kashmir was as undependable as it was dangerous to the country's interests and that effective survival of Central ruling party in Kashmir, if not other national parties, was the best way for survival of India in Kashmir. It seemed to have already gone home to Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his Plebiscite Front leaders as also understood by Dr. Farooq Abdullah. They were already of the idea that in order to loosen the tie with the rest of India, the condition preceded was to weaken and then to give a burial to the Central ruling Party in Kashmir, which always was treated as a direct and forcible link between Kashmir and with rest of India. The effective existence of Central ruling party in Kashmir was regarded as synonymous with Central rule in Kashmir. The first act of the communal, secessionist and destabilising forces in Kashmir was to snap the link of Central party with Kashmir so that the field was left open and political void thus created, could be filled up with communal and secessionist elements. Mir Qasim appeared to have no guts to face these elements. That is why I and my group was not in favour of wiping out Congress in Kashmir, from eighties, despite the fact that I have been a vehement critic and opponent of the Congress all along my life. This review in our stand was made not for any personal interest, but with all sincerety and utmost honesty, keeping exclusively in view the national interests and the situation that was developing in Kashmir. I, however, never chose to join the Congress, and preferred to remain throughout in opposition.

I became sceptic that sovereignty of India and democracy in vogue would not go together in Kashmir, nor would work well under the prevalent circumstances, which I will refer to, in succeeding pages. I, therefore, wanted alliances of all pro-

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[116] *Qasim-Indira Correspondence.*

India elements in Kashmir, to combat the attempts of communalising the politics, activities aiming at ceceding Kashmir from rest of the country and creating an atmosphere of acute uncertainity and horror coupled with conditions of destabilisation.

Sheikh Abdullah became Chief Minister surreptitiously in 1975. It was perhaps a unique instance in the democratic world that the Chief Minister and the other Ministers selected by him, were neither members of the legislature nor was their Party represented in the House. It was an irony that they were there with the support of the Party which they had opposed all along this period. He used to speak vehemently against the Congress Party. He, therefore, revived National Conference and wound up the Plebiscite Front. The revived National Conference of Sheikh Abdullah itself explained the need for the same in a brochure. It stated :

> *"All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference represents continuity of the political movement in the State which was interrupted and disrupted in 1953. Its revival in July, 1975 was in fact a logical corollary of the historic Accord between Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and the Government of India that sought to correct the unfortunate aberration caused in the politics of the State 22 years ago.*
>
> *The accord is an event of momentous importance for the State and the whole country. It endeavors to restore relations of the State with the Centre on the basis of the ideological affinity between the two and popular support of the people of the State.*
>
> *Consistent with the spirit of the Accord, the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front, headed and founded by Mirza Mohamed Afzal Beg under the patronage of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, was considered to be irrelevant and was, therefore, dissolved. After its dissolution, a vital important question before it was the future name of the organisation under whose banner the forces of democracy, secularism , socialism in all parts of the State could be consolidated. Even when the present leadership of the National Conference was working in the name of the Plebiscite Front, it had exposed these very principles. The change of name, therefore, did not involve any re-orientation or change in its basic ideology.*
>
> *While Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and his colleagues who had led Kashmir's Accession to India in 1947 and who , by signing the Accord, once again made Kashmir a willing part of the Indian Union" .*[117]

The revived National Conference and its leader Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah designed to eliminate and liquidate Congress in Kashmir and to have a monopoly over the politics of Kashmir. Congress, he regarded, was forging a strong link

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117. "Why National Conference" , a brochure published by the Sheikh's National Conference in Srinagar after regaining power in 1975 between Kashmir and the rest of India.

In fact the branch of every national party of India, was a step towards emotional integration of Kashmir with the rest of the country. The Sheikh and his men seemed to keep the process of Kashmir's full and emotional integration with the country under check. So long as they said that Kashmir had acceded to India, it was okay, and when they would deny the Accession or its validity, it was no longer an Accession and the chapter of Accession could be conveniently reopened and uncertainty created. This is what used to happen in Kashmir and the people lived almost under constant uncertainty since 1947.

The indication of this design was also given when National Conference attributed Kashmir's Accession to Sheikh Abdullah and said that he *"once again made Kashmir a willing part of the Indian Union"*.

The Sheikh and his National Conference therefore, did not like setting up of or continuous functioning of units of the national parties in Kashmir, more so, the unit of Indian National Congress. They wanted to maintain a distance and live in isolation, away from the influence of the rest of the country, leaving scope for separation in future, howsoever distant that might be. In maligning Congress or other units of Indian Parties, they always tried to find faults and look for excuses.

> *"The manner in which Congress was imposed on the State in the prevailing political atmosphere of the time, made it an effective instrument of alienation of the people of Kashmir from the rest of India. If the Pradesh Congress Committee was able to stabilise and strengthen the unity of the state with the rest of the country, there was hardly any need for the Accord and change in the leadership of the Government"* . [118]

It was Sheikh Abdullah himself who wanted to patch up with the Government of India after Bangladesh war. While Baig Parthasarthy talks were going on in New Delhi, the Central government neither agreed to go to pre 1953 position nor to effect any other change and modification in that position. Baig accordingly informed Sheikh Abdullah finally in Srinagar on telephone that the Central Government was not even agreeing to change the designations of Chief Minister into Prime Minister and that of Governor into Sadr-i-Riyasat.

The impatient Sheikh replied not to press any such demands then and ask them to transfer power which should be without any delay. The entire State Congress except Mir Qasim was however, against transferring power to Sheikh Abdullah as they did not want to part with power and were prepared to face, unlike Mir Quasim, Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front.

With Janata Party coming to power in the Centre in 1977, the state Congress legislature party informed Sheikh Abdullah of its decision to withdraw support. The

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118. "Why National Conference " - a brochure published by the Sheikh's National Conference after regaining power in 1975.

Sheikh's position became precarious. His prestige had already received a blow at the hands of Congress when on the appointed day and time, in the past, all the proposed Congress ministers intentionally failed to appear at Raj Bhawan to take oath for induction in offices. The Congress was not satisfied with his selection and the lesser number of Congress ministers was asked to take oath. After waiting for some time, the ceremony was cancelled, putting the Sheikh in a pitiable position. Those were, however, the days of Congress hegemony. Things had changed now. It was the rule of the Janata Party at the Centre. Their mutual strife was a game of interplay between Congress and National Conference and a tit for tat. Despite all that, withdrawal of support to Sheikh Abdullah was not in good taste, nor correct morally or advisable politically. It negated the "Accord". If the "Accord" was defective or couldnot be acted upon by its authors, it was fair and essential not to reach and execute an "Accord" at all.

The Sheikh, therefore, recommended to the Governor the dissolution of the State Assembly and holding of fresh elections. He approached the Janata Government in this connection and they forthright acceded to his request. It was again bad politically and without constitutional propriety.

Janata Government, therefore, obliged Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah whose recommendations were not in conformity with the spirit of parliamentary democracy and constitutional mandate. The Congress had overwhelming majority of the elected members in the House and the Party was ordinarily within its right to have the new leader of the house elected. It was the same House which chose to confer power on Sheikh Abdullah, though as per Accord, and elected him leader of the House. Why did then the Sheikh, without having a single member of his own in the House, and being alien to the ruling Congress Party recommend its dissolution and why should have the Janata Government agreed thereto, and robbed the duly elected members of their vested rights to exercise the choice of electing a new leader from among their own partymen when they continued to enjoy the absolute majority in the House? True, the Janata Party dissolved the Assemblies of as many as nine provinces on the ground that those provinces had returned bulk of Janata Party members to the Lok Sabha. It was construed as implied vote of no confidence against the existing Congress ministries in the concerned provinces. In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, however, Janata Party had failed to win any seat for Parliament. The analogy of other nine States, therefore, could neither be relevant nor applicable to the State. The blame for withdrawal of support was on the Congress but blame for dissolution of the Assembly lies on the Centre.

Whenever a wrong was committed for the benefit of Sheikh Abdullah, he would bypass it and never acknowledge it as if nothing had happened. But whenever any wrong was done to him, may be, in the national interests, he would make a mountain of a mole hill and even go back on his erstwhile committed stand.

CHAPTER XIV

Some trends, events and undercurrents

Assembly elections ensued. Confrontation between National Conference and Janata Party evinced great mass enthusiasm and involvement. It was the first election of its type ever held and witnessed in Kashmir. "Janata wave" surcharged the atmosphere in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah tried to avoid confrontation with Janata Party and had negotiations with the Central leadership of the Party for electoral alliance. The local Party stalwarts persuaded their central leadership not to accept the offer of the Sheikh, as they were hoping to form the Government independently. Janata Party proved a loser. Sheikh Abdullah became out of sorts, not knowing the turn that the election would take. He also did not undertake election campaigning in favour of National Conference. All the anti Sheikh elements had rallied round Janata Party. Moulvi Farooq was on the vanguard. It was an election fought in the name of Indian democracy. Two rival pro-Indian parties were vehemently contesting each other for achieving power. Mirza Mohammed Afzal Baig and other National Conference leaders, told their gatherings that the election was a substitute for Plebiscite and that the electorate had to exercise its right cautiously. They asked for vote and support to National Conference as the Party had always fought for the cause of people. Janata Party highlighted the vacillating attitudes of the leaders in the past and negation of civil liberties as well as maltreatment meted out to the people. It particularly assailed the National Conference leadership. The local election manifesto of State Janata Party (1977), while referring to this leadership, said:

> *"It became a fashion with rulers to wax eloquent about the secular traditions and temperament of Kashmiris but, in the same breath, they would dub every self-respecting Muslim as a Pakistani agent and every Hindu patriot as an RSS enthusiast. The Kashmir nabobs resorted to blackmailing the Central leaders to achieve their personal ends and would raise, at times, the slogans of plebiscite and right of self determination if the Central leadership slightly tried to resist the fulfillment of their extravagant ambitions. The unprincipled self-seekers had only one purpose in mind; to amass wealth, whether coming from indigenous sources or from foreign countries. When events forced them to be friendly with India they brazen facedly turned somersaults and signed pacts neutralising the effect of their own slogans but felt no qualms of conscience in doing so."*

Janata Party commenced a ruthless campaign against the person of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and badly exposed him to the electorate. The Party brought to light for information of general masses, his contradictory personality and antagonistic political phases and aspects of his life. Whenever he was out of power, his utterances were anti India and pleadings for holding of plebiscite in Kashmir. In power, he would, however give a different version, speak in favour of India and treat plebiscite as an obsolete slogan. A big wall poster captioned, "Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah - in the light of his own statements", (Urdu) issued by Janata Party, quoted him as having said, for instance, in the periods he was out of power :

> *"——The future of Kashmir can be decided only by people of Kashmir. We had better die and be wiped out if we do not get independence. Our stand is the same from the very beginning. We have not given any option to Pakistan or to India. Power is a petty thing. We cannot betray the trust of the nation for such petty things."*

Quoting the Sheikh in another statement, the Poster reads:

> *"Even if we are able to find a solution to the problem of Kashmir, it will prove useless until we are able to enlist the co-operation of Pakistan. The only solution of this problem is plebiscite."*

The poster also brings out a contrast in the statements of Sheikh Abdullah when he was in power. It further reads :

> *"Plebiscite is an obsolete slogan. There is no need to keep the Plebiscite Front intact. We should join the national mainstream by compromising with the times."*

In another statement, the Sheikh says, as incorporated in the poster:

> *"The accession that we made with India in 1947, is irrevocable. We have no dispute with India on Accession. Under the Kashmir Accord, I have got the Chief Ministership."* [119]

Janata Party did not hesitate to publicise the adverse opinion expressed about the Sheikh by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. This stalwart of India was sought to be maligned by quoting the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and placing credence on what he said about the Sheikh. Ostensibly, a soft corner was shown by Janata Party for Jinnah and Pakistan, which is, however, not uncommon in Kashmir, as against Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, to attract the sympathy of those who were anti Sheikh and anti India.

It was contained in a big wall poster No. 2, (Urdu) captioned, "*Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah - In his own eyes and in the eyes of outstanding international personalities.*" Under the sub-heading "*The thirty three years prior historical statement of Qaid-e-Azm Mohammed Ali Jinnah*", the particular statement of Jinnah issued to the Press in Srinagar on July 2, 1944, is quoted in a part of this poster, which reads:[120]

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[119] *This is an English translation of the few Urdu excerpts, quoted in the poster issued by Jammu and Kashmir Janata Party during the State Assembly elections held in 1977.*

> *"As I have already said we are concerned with the welfare of Muslims. Before my coming to this place, Sheikh Abdullah and his party and also Muslim Conference men had called on me in Delhi and Lahore. They accorded me warm ovation on my arrival here and also exchanged of ideas. They were keen that I should hear both the parties and effect a compromise. After my thoughtful consideration I suggested that Muslims should assemble on one platform and under one banner. But I regret to say that my advice was not acceptable to Sheikh Abdullah. As his habit goes, which is innate in him, he had, using slang language with provocation, made ridiculous attacks and hurled abuses on me. My advice to Muslims is that they can resolve their conflicts through exchange of ideas and views, by advancement of arguments and counter arguments and not by rowdyism. I draw the attention of Kashmir Government towards hooliganism that should be suppressed at all costs and also to see that freedom of speech and freedom of thought is constitutionally guaranteed, which is the fundamental right of every citizen under a civilised Government."* [121]

It was for the first time in the life time of Sheikh Abdullah that he was openly and publicly opposed and criticised so strongly and widely. Due to neutrality of the Central Government in elections, the Kashmir bureaucracy switched over their loyalty to Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference. They, therefore, supported this Party in the poll and also rigged the election in some of the places in favour of National Conference, thinking that power monopoly would be retained by Kashmir if National Conference succeeded, otherwise it might be diluted or shared dominently by Jammu.

Many Central Party leaders had visited Kashmir and addressed public meetings at different places. Prime Minister Morarji Desai also visited Kashmir. His programme included a visit to Moulvi Farooq's residence. He was given a rousing reception there by hoisting Islamic green flags and the Muslim ladies singing Kashmiri songs, "Pakistanuk Ghazi hai aaw" (The hero of Pakistan has come). He, therefore, became apprehensive about Janata Party and its footing in Kashmir.

National Conference won the election. Its candidates returned from all constituencies, except two in Kashmir Valley and bagged some seats in Jammu

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120. Pamphlets containing this statement were also published and distributed by State Janata Party during the State Assembly elections.

121. This statement, however, appears to have been translated from English into Urdu as contained in the poster and the Pamphlet. It has been now retranslated from Urdu into English, without seeing the original text in English. As such, language is not the same as used in the original statement.

also. It formed the Government. National Conference workers made jubilations and for some time, made it difficult for Janata Party workers, supporters and sympathisers to come freely out of their houses. Some of their houses were attacked and property damaged. Many workers were seriously injured and others fled to safety. A refugee camp of such people came to be set up at Islamia High School Srinagar. No body in Kashmir or in Delhi bothered at all for these afflicted and harassed people, who participated in the election, not for Pakistan, but in the name of India. Thereafter, Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah forcibly snatched "Forest Lodge", the Janata Party Headquarters in Srinagar, and seized all record and articles. The "stalwarts" were helpless about their exit from Janata Party in the days to follow. The bulk of the people who had joined national mainstream through Janata Party, had lost faith and confidence in the capacity of India to retain Kashmir and to extend protection to its loyal citizens. Baring others a mass of people had for the first time aligned themselves openly with the Central ruling party and had thus, joined the national mainstream. They were not among the people who had been changing sides and shifting loyalties like a weather cock. As their confidence was shattered, it was not easy to restore it, nor any effort was made to restore it later.

The result is that the Janata Government also could not enlarge the base of Indian democracy in Kashmir when an opportunity came to it for doing so. But it did a great damage to the cause of India instead, by allowing a large section of the people to be injured, threatened and left to frustrate and languish. What is this Central ruling Party which they belong to and why did they get this shabby treatment ? The workers were crying, but unheeded to, by the Central Party and the Union Government, nor any body cared to console them. The local leadership of the Party also got dejected and deserted the party one by one. The Central leaders and their weak and mediocre leadership have had no perception about the situation in Kashmir, have always been on the wrong about Kashmir, nor have they any time to get an insight into the real situation in Kashmir. This was the last nail in the coffin of Indian democracy in Kashmir and people to people contacts that was hoped to bring Kashmir closer to India. Preceding the current crisis, the same misguided policies and attitudes were repeated by the Union Government and the Central leaders.

What alternative had all these frustrated people when they felt neglected and dejected ? They had to search for, therefore, some way out to save their skin. Such and similar disgruntled youngmen perhaps thought later on to take extreme and harsh steps in collaboration with others and preferred dreaded militancy to normal methods of democracy, as in democracy they were trampled over, neverthless instigated and boosted up they were by foreign quarters. In accepting the finality of accession of Kashmir to India and acting on the local election manifesto of Janata Party, they had to pay a heavy price and were ruthlessly dealt with and some were even compelled to go into hiding for some time.

Janata Party leaders camp was held at Dodablabpur (Banglore) in July 1984, I also attended this camp and met Morarji Desai there. I enquired of him why he had not kept Sheikh Abdullah under check and had instead allowed him to deteriorate the situation in Kashmir. He replied that India was a big country, what could Sheikh Abdullah do ? Once he tried to do some hanky panky, he was given mind of the Central Government and "*I asked him to behave otherwise I will take you to grave*", [122] Desai told me. I was not satisfied with his reply and the Government of India seemed always to be too complacent about Kashmir. Whosoever is holding the seat of power in New Delhi, appears to be least bothered about Kashmir and concerned more about securing and retaining his chair rather than securing cohesion among the people. They are lost in "*bigness*" and the "*variedness*" of India and loose sight of Kashmir's complex situation. The current conditions, therefore, could not be too unexpected.

The Ministry of V. P. Singh was the worst Government that India experienced. V. P. Singh's incapacity and failures on all fronts and sides brought India on the brink of disaster. He and his Home Minister, Mufti Mohamed Syed, are culpably responsible for worsening the situation in Kashmir. They have further ruined Kashmir where numerous Jawans of our security forces are being killed regularly. Chandra Shekhar and his government are no better and have acted as a stooge of the Congress which they had to be. V.P. Singh's splinter group of Congress, and the Shekhar ministry deserve public indictment and punishment for their acts of commission and omission.

It is unfortunate for the country that the persons rejected by the Congress, impose themselves over the heads of the opposition and rule the country, tarnishing the image of the opposition and frustrating the electorate. Congress is ruling the country indirectly, through its discarded huenchmen, who deserve to be eliminated politically as early as possible.

Sheikh Abdullah had no political consistency. He altered his stand with the varying situations. Ostensibly, he had come round and owed allegiance to India. But he could not stick to this stand for long and in all bonafides. The political trait of Sheikh Abdullah was aptly described in a brief form : "*A wag once said of Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Sahib is a communist in Delhi, a socialist in Jammu and a communalist in Srinagar*" [123]

Sheikh Abdullah was an Indian to uproot India in Kashmir. It was not a change of heart : it was a change of strategy and not of policy. His rejoining of the national mainstream appeared to be with the idea of subverting further the process of Kashmir's integration with India, defying the growth and dissemination of secular and nationalist thought and thwarting the conducive and healthy non communal activities. His main thrust was on Islamisation of entire State of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu region is mostly inhabited by Hindus. The city of Jammu, state's winter capital, is overwhelmingly populated by Hindus. Any anti national, communal and even anti Hindu activities in Kashmir Valley would generally evoke protest, adverse reaction or resistance, in the winter capital. It was a sore in the eyes, of Sheikh and other Kashmir leaders.

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[122] *A Party colleague Mr. Santosh Gupta was with me when I called on Mr. Morarji Desai.*

[123] *From Prem Bhasin 's article published in Express Magazine, January, 23, 1983.*

Sheikh Abdullah, therefore, planned to reduce the Hindu population of Jammu city and to have a ring of Muslim colonies laid around it : With this view, he officially encouraged settlement of Muslims in and around Jammu city and initiated positive steps in connection therewith. Settlement of Muslims is a welcome step provided it is purely on non-communal basis and without malafides, as valued citizens. But it was planned exclusively on communal considerations. The Government, therefore, established a Gujjar Nagar adjoining the city, for Muslims. Apparently government set up this colony in the name of backward Muslims (Gujjars) but in fact, it was laid exclusively for general Muslims. Consequently, the other Muslims abound the colony and have their plots and houses more than the "Gujjars" have, and that too, to the exclusion of down trodden Hindus. The backward and weaker sections of the Hindu community were not, like Muslims, exclusively allotted residential plots and granted other concessions as above. Even the extremely backward Hindu"Banjars" and "Zcheenchs", groups of whom used to come from Jammu region and loiter in Kashmir Valley, were never given such concessions, which they so richly deserved. What an open and shameful discrimination on the basis of religious persuation ! Most of the terrorist activities in Jammu city have been detected in this area. The Government also encouraged and helped Muslims to settle at Qasim Nagar and other places close to Jammu. In the name of 'weaker sections' of the people, the Gujjars and other Muslims were encouraged and helped to lay a ring around the winter capital. But did not at all bother for "Gaddies", a hilly clan of Hindus in Jammu, who are also among the weaker sections of the society, but no colony, was laid for them in Jammu. The Government went ahead in its designs. A State Government Press Note, inter alia, says:

> *"..............In addition to 91 plot colony for Gujjars and Bakarwals at Sunjwan near Jammu, a new colony is being developed in Jammu which, will have 243 housing plots".* [124]

Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Minister of the State had over and above, passed an order in writing on the concerned file that the "Gujjars" be given gun license but not "Gaddies. " [125] He flagrantly discriminated between Muslim Gujjars and Hindu

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[124] J & K Govt. Press Note dated May 14, 1979, issued from Srinagar.,

[125] Gujjars are all Muslims in the State pf J & K. Gaddies are also a hilly tribe, connected with pasturing of live stock etc. But they are all Hindus.

Gujjars. Under the pretext of arming them, he sought to arm the Muslims of Jammu region.

He organised Muslim Auqaf in the region of Jammu as well. Wherever, like Kashmir, government land or any other vacant and unclaimed land in this region was found and where Auqaf could lay its hand upon, was either directly transferred to the Auqaf or was captured by the Auqaf.

Sheikh Abdullah again came out openly in his true colours when he green signalled the introduction and passage of the most controversial Resettlement Bill in the State Assembly. This bill sought to legalise the permanent return and settlement in the State, of the people who had left and gone to Pakistan or to Pakistan occupied Kashmir between 1st March, 1947 to 1954. These people were obviously no other than the Muslims who grabbed along with some other Muslims of the State, one third area of the Maharaja's State of Jammu and Kashmir, forming now, except Gilgit and connected areas, Pakistan occupied "Azad Kashmir", Gilgit Agency of the State has directly been annexed by Pakistan with its territory.

The Bill, besides inviting the people across the border, who had been mostly anti India, to this part of the State, aimed at snatching possession of whatever small immovable property had come in the occupation of Hindu, Sikh refugees, in Jammu and handing over the same back to such people. Out of the evacuee property left in Kashmir Valley, a large portion thereof has at various points of time in the past been transferred either to Auqaf Islamia or to Muslims with the initiative or under the connivance or collaboration of the State Government. Not a single Hindu/Sikh refugee, has been benefited, unlike the Muslims in "Azad Kashmir" who grabbed the Hindu Sikh properties there.

This is the height of Muslims communalism and anti India policy, devoid of human element as it is, and followed constantly as a regular feature in the State, regardless as to who the Chief Minister was, that the Hindu Sikh refugees, having crossed over to this side in 1947, in general and those particularly belonging to the other side of this State, had been deprived of all facilities and benefits and many of them, of basic human rights too. They have never been extended any patronage, hope and succour, nor have they been treated at par with other refugees in India, or for that matter, even in Pakistan. They have not been paid any compensation for their properties left behind in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The plight of other refugees is no less inhuman. They are neither treated even now as citizens of the State nor conferred "State subject" rights. Their fate along with their progeny is in the doldrums and hanging fire for all these forty three years of post independence.

When the suffering human beings in the State were sidelined and ignored; when no serious endeavour was ever made to allay their anguish, how is it then that the heart of the rulers leaped out in sympathy and caught the sight of the Muslims alone, living across the Line of Actual Control, to befriend them ? The issue of State

Subject certificates in favour of Hindu boys and girls in Kashmir was delayed, some times even denied on the untenable plea that his or her father was serving or residing outside the State. What a contrast! Every Government in the State contributed its mite for Islamisation, for helping the Muslims out of the way and even at the cost of Hindus and Indian interests, for creating an unhealthy and explosive atmosphere and last, but not least of all, for creating the deep rooted crisis, in which the State is engulfed today. These and similar series of actions are bound to have a reaction too. It is just and proper though extremely belated that the entire property left behind anywhere in this side of the Jammu and Kashmir state, by the persons having gone across the Line of Actual Control or in Pakistan, whether treated as evacuee property or not, should fairly be transferred and distributed among all refugees in the State without any discrimination, with full ownership rights.

The Resettlement Bill was introduced in the Assembly on March 30, 1982, by a private member belonging to the ruling National Conference. It was passed the same day and got approval of the Legislative Council the next week. I had come on a week's political tour of Jammu when the passage of this Bill was announced. I was perhaps the first person who publicly denounced this bill on the same day, in a public meeting held at Akhnoor. What need the State Government had felt in passing this Bill, was later on explained by the State Government through the then Law Minister. This explanation makes an interesting reading, which says :

> *"Doubts have been expressed in certain quarters and in a section of the Press about the objectives of the Bill passed by the State Legislature recently.........prompted the Muslim majority State who cherished these ideals to join India under the inspiring leadership of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, rejecting Muslim Pakistan. In taking this bold decision, however, Kashmiris had to suffer many trials and tribulations : undergo numerous hardships and pass through traumatic experience of aggressions. It was a grim situation and in the holocaust that followed in the wake of tribal raids many families from the State were disintegrated so much so that father got separated from son, mother from her daughter and brother from brother. This sad episode in the life of the people of the State became all the more poignant in the subsequent years when these separated families could not re-unite and continued to pine and long to meet their near and dear ones separated from each other by the cruel fate. This separation was neither by design nor by option, as was the case with other people of the sub-continent who consciously chose to migrate from one country to another as a sequel to the partition of the sub-continent. This was a price paid by the people of the State simply for linking their fate with secular India.*[126]

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[126] *"A solemn Pledge Redeemed" —Directorate of Information, J & K Govt.*

How the people in India were being befooled by the State Government, the instance whereof, only one among the numerous of course, is provided by the above lines. Pakistan had attacked this State through her barbaric hordes in 1947, even before Instrument of Accession was executed by the Maharaja in favour of India. Pakistan, as a result, forcibly annexed one third territory as against the one fourth population of the State which chose to go and settle in Pakistan. Some others also went to settle there. Similarly the remnant Hindus and Sikhs who could save themselves and did not like to stay in Pak occupied area, shifted to this part of the State though some of their relatives still live there but as converts to Islam. This is a more gruesome tragedy where not only forced separation of non-Muslim kith and kin occurred but even the religio social relationship of a brother is snatched from his sister, of a father from his son and of a mother from her daughter, by the cruel, fanatic and inhuman hands of assailants. With festering wounds in their hearts, these Hindus Sikhs can neither pine nor long for them. It was a one way traffic, without any logic for special preference to Muslims, hurting thus the feelings and vanity of the Hindus and Sikhs on such sensitive issues. There was obviously, no price paid for linking the fate of Kashmiri's with India, but undoubtedly Indian secularism had to pay always a high price for such actions and works of the State rulers.

Governor B. K. Nehru withheld his assent and returned the Bill for reconsideration by the legislature. He was to seek the opinion of Attorney General of India also. After the sad demise of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, his son Dr Farooq Abdullah as Chief Minister got this Bill through in Legislature, notwithstanding the protests made by some saner elements.

Rabi Ray while speaking to the workers assembled in our political camp at Batote (Jammu) termed this Bill as "*dangerous for the security and integrity of India*".[127] It was also regarded as an attempt for "*states separation from the rest of India*".[128] The implementation of the Bill was stopped as an appeal was filed against it in the Supreme Court.

Infiltration into the state was always taking place particulary through Rajouri sector which was treated as a security risk. The Resettelement Bill was all the more a security risk. A retired Justice of the State High Court (name purposely not quoted) told me long back that illegal infiltration was often taking place from Rajouri sector. The army used to hand over such persons to the local police, who in turn filed charge sheets against them in the court. On confession of the offence, the Court would impose a nominal fine and imprisonement till rising of the Court. They were thus set at liberty but would stay back and indulge in spying also. At a function, a high military officer brought it to the notice of the said justice and wanted

127. The Awaz -i-Jammu, July 2, 1982.

128. Mr. A. Hariharan in The Hindustan Times, May 14, 1982.

to know from him as to why the Court did not pass "push back" orders against those persons, otherwise their illegal entry was regularised and legalised. The Justice further told me that the Magistrate was then tactfully transferred from that place in order to check illegal infiltration from that area.

At the prospect of moving and passing Resettlement Bill, the Government had issued more than 30 years after, orders regularly, declaring the vast immovable properties both structural and landed, measuring thousands of Kanals allegedly left behind in Jammu region by those gone to Paksitan, as evacuee property. The object was to get hold of and preserve, where it is unoccupied and to snatch the possession from the refugees and other non-Muslims, wherever it is occupied, and to consolidate these properties separately and in advance under the authorities of Custodian department, so that on return of people from across the borders possession of the same would be transferred to them easily without any hue and cry. The bulk of such orders had begun to flow from late seventies. Among the spate of orders passed, for instance, the following is one such order which reads :

> *"Government of Jammu and Kashmir (Rehabilitation Department) Office of the District Assistant Custodian Evacuee property, Udhampur.*
> *Notification Dated 25th of November, 1981.*
> *In pursuance of sub-section (i) of the Jammu and Kashmir State Evacuees (Administration of Property) Act VI, the Custodian is pleased to notify for general information the list of evacuee properties specified in the schedule annexed hereto, which have vested in him."*[129]

The long list of landed property measuring hundreds of Kanals of land and some structures is annexed as schedule to the order, giving description of the property and the locality where it is situated. Localities of as many as 35 villages have been listed. This order and list pertains to District Udhampur but is only one of the orders passed about this district.

Another similar order dated November 8, 1980, is passed and signed by District Astt-Custodian, Poonch. The order covers properties falling in various villages of the sensitive and vulnerable border district of Poonch. This is also one of the orders passed about this district, which is prone to infilitration and disruption.

In the Valley of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah in 1980 embarked upon the policy of changing the old names of the villages : he had directed the Revenue Department to change suitably the names of places and villages where these were named after some individuals or had such resemblance. It had appeared in the Government Gazette of the state also. The real background behind this "modernisation" scheme was to change all those names which had some link or semblance with Hindu culture or bore any historical back ground which could be related to

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129. Jammu and Kashmir Government Gazette No. 16, July 15, 1982.

Hindus and Hinduism, being the oldest surviving institution in the Valley. These were in fact the secret instructions. Under this scheme, traces of Hindu cultrue and history connected with these names and places and still embodied in Government records, were sought to be obliterated and changed. Sheikh Abdullah appeared keen to disinherit the past of his Hindu ancestors and wanted to mark new beginnings by introducing fresh Islamic cultural back ground and mutilating the Government records.

He had not , however, specifically directed to have the Hindu names or of their deities only deleted and substituted, but in general it was suggested to give them new modern names. The policy in vogue beneath the surface was a sufficient indication for the departmental personnel as to what was meant to be done. And they did act on it. The entire revenue record was being tampered with and the places and villages with the names connected with Hindu culture or having resemblance with Hindu dieties or having any link with Hindu ethos and history were in process changed and substituted. It created a confusion. Kashmir has a long history and hardly is there any place or village which has not a historical background. It had an effect of disproving and distorting Kashmir history.

In the regime of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the new Revenue Minister, proving himself "more loyal than the king", revived the previous directions and issued fresh instructions to carry out the scheme of "modernising" the names of the places. Many of the old names were changed and substituted by words from Persian or having some Islamic touch or link . Confusion was experienced as the task was gigantic one, for the Hindu history and culture in the Valley of Kashmir was surviving from time immemorial. Its impact and impression on the Valley was so vast, varied and strong that it had still inured and existed in many forms and in some cases was carried with the names of places and shrines, which was tactfully sought to be changed.

When the Government itself was bent upon to launch a multi pronged crusade, which in fact it did, endangering Hindu minority and their culture and all that was Hindu or Indian, why would not then the younger Muslim generation follow it drastically? Such activities and policies having given a fillip to Muslim fanaticism and fundamentalism and generating anti India feelings, boosted up secessionist and disruptive forces. They weaved the cobweb gladly and voluntarily, but became gloomy when they found themselves caught in their own web haplessly. It is not the question in whose regime it happened. The question is in whose regime did it not happen and why these trends and under currents were allowed to persisit?

The result was that religious intolerance became more pronounced, attack on Hindu shrines and culture more poignant, anti national movement more rampant and secessionist activities more crystalised. All this was a prelude to what is happening now in Kashmir. The ground was prepared in all these long years and seeds of trouble and turmoil, fundamentalism and fanaticism, disruption and secession, terrorism and militancy were sown and nourished. Pakistan found the time opportune and the atmosphere congenial. She stepped in actively, aided and channelised the surging wave of anti India cunningly.

Feuds on HiIndu temples and shrines were increasing with out showing any signs of recession. In many cases the places of worship were descrated and in other cases they were encroached upon and in still other cases, counter claims were set up by the Muslims to capture the shrine in its entirely. These were the three main types of interference with the religious places of Hindus in the Valley of Kashmir. There were additional two types of onslaughts on their cultural existence and religious independence: it was stealing of idols from the places of worship and making open attacks, even murderous on the worshipers. Stealing of idols has some times been purely cases of theft and other times with the motive of attacking infidelity. An idol of Radha for instance, "weighing 30 kg and with gold, was stolen from a temple near Danau Bogund village, district Anantnag".[130] In any case, it touches religious susceptibilities of Hindus.

One of the important persisting disputes was that of "Bhokhatiashwar Bhairov Nath Mandir" Chattabal, Srinagar. Food Control Department of Jammu and Kashmir State encroached upon and occupied the Bathing Ghat and other premises of this shrine in 1951 and misused the Ghat for distribution and sale of rations . The Advocate for the Asthapan issued a notice dated April 2, 1960, under section 80 CPC to the Chief Secretary for removal of encroachment and payment of damages. The notice inter alia said:

> *"That Shri Bhokhatkishwar Bhairov Nath Asthapan, Chattabal, Srinagar is and continues to be, an ancient, holy shrine of the Hindus—— That the said Asthapan Ghat is and has been with the Hindu Community in general, always used by the Hindus of Chattabal in particular, for the observance of religious rites and worship such as daily Sandhya, Kriya Karam, Shradhas, etc., for hundreds of years past.——*
>
> *That the entire compound of the said shrine has been reduced to a public market place by the said illegal and unlawful encroachment by use and occupation of the said Bathing Ghat and other premises of the said shrine with night soil, urine, filth and rubbish of every kind" .*[131]

The notice was not acted upon. The Muslims had no sanctity for the shrine, and the desecration and encroachment of the temple increased day by day. What the law abiding Hindus got after quite a long wait of over decades and various implorations made to the government and Muslim leaders to vacate the encroachment and restore the sanctity of this sacred temple? A violent attack was carried on them by the Muslims in the very premises of the shrine when they were engaged in performing the usual annual "Yagya" ceremony there. The function was disrupted, pell-mell created, utensils and other materials snatched and damaged, and the Hindu participants brutally manhandled, insulted, injured and chased away. The temple since stands uncared for as the Hindus were made to surrender its possession . It has been converted into a den of ruffians though nominally guarded by the State police. The shameful thing is that the Police Division is housed in a part of the adjoining building belonging to this temple and the Hindus, men, women and children were attacked and injured under their very nose. The Hindus had made fervent appeals to Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah also to intervene in the matter and give them justice, which they never received. The Managing Committee of the Asthapan hoped that after assuming power again in 1975, the Sheikh might do them justice, which he never did.

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[130] *The "Faroge-Wattan, Jammu, 25th September , 1987.*

[131] *Notice dated April 2, 1960. issued against the State Government by Mr. R. N. Vaishnavi, Advocate for and on behalf of the Shrine Committee.*

The Hindus had made the Bhairov Mandir case a test case; they launched regular protests and appealed to the Government to give them justice, but no heed was paid. It is now nearing two decades since this temple lay in a desolate condition and Hindus have not been since going there as a protest. This is how the secularism becomes a casualty in Kashmir and indicates under what conditions the Hindus had been eking out their existence there. Besides above cases of theft of the idols, attacks on the shrines and worshippers, encroachments and unfounded counter claims had become a cause of constant harassment and annoyance to the Hindus. Most of the Hindu shrines at various and different places in the Valley including "Bhadra Kali". (Handwara), "Chandigam", (Nagabal), "Lok Bhawan", "Khrew" "Gautamnag" "Ganesh Mandir"(Srinagar),"Chakraishwari"(Hari Parbat) and "Kherbhawani" have been under constant surveillance for long past. First the Hindu deities were under surveillance,then the Hindus themselves came under surveillance.After all, how long Hindus and their deities could have survived under surveillance in the Valley? The things had to come to surface one day or the other,as they did.

In the famous holy shrine of Jagat Ambha (Chakraishwari Sharika Devi) Hariparbat, Srinagar, couple of "Pujaries" were seriously injured, one Pujari was killled on the spot by the assailants in May, 1972. The large scale desecration, damage and destruction of Hindu property and their religious places and shrines in Anantnag district in 1986 is a black scar on the face of secularism.

The Hindus were meted out a differential treatment in the matter of their shrines and temples as well. Take for instance, the case of above Sharika Chakraishwari. It's Sanstha (Managing Committee) was not even permitted to raise a wall

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132. Mr. Nila Kanth Nehru (now deceased) was the President of Sharika Chakraishwari Sanstha, Srinagar.

on the land belonging to the shrine. The President[132] of the Sanstha narrated a woeful tale in a printed pamphlet dated July 22nd, 1983. It inter alia, reads:

> *"..........the Sanstha approached the Government for grant of permission for walling of the land.........Despite strenuous efforts and close follow up with the concerned quarters the formal permission for walling was not accorded. The Sanstha in the meantime decided to fence the landed properties till the formal permission for walling was given. All the tracts of land were fenced with barbed wire at a very high cost. A Chowkidar was appointed to look after the properties. Certain anti social elements harassed the Chowkidar who left the job and ran away. A retired sub-Inspector of Police, a Sikh gentleman, was subsequently appointed to look after the said job. He too met the same fate and had to leave ultimately. Later on a Muslim gentleman gardener cum chowkidar was appointed and a special hut was constructed for him in Devi Angan itself. But that fellow too had to leave under the pressure of anti social elements. In the meantime all the barbed wire and deodar poles were removed and taken away by the said anti social elements stealthily during night time".*

This is how the Hindus were impelled to think in terms of alienating the property in favour of the Muslims and wind up their show in Kashmir, otherwise, as it indicated in the face of so many other instances, they genuinely feared acts of torture and violence, which caused their exit from Kashmir. The President further expressed his helplessness which in fact was the helplessness of all the Hindus in Kashmir Valley.

> *"After walling yagya Khettar we brought it under plough but the anti social elements again harassed us by letting loose their cattle and the entire crop was wiped out. As a next step the Sanstha decided to convert the land into an orchard and thousands of trees were planted. After a span of a few months all the trees were uprooted and the entire area rendered as barren and plain land. Meanwhile, the land grab was on and most of the areas adjacent to our tracts of land popularly known as Baghi Ram Singh etc. etc. were taken over........taking over the area of Baghi Ram Singh blocked the passage of the "Prakarma" around the sacred hillock. The Sanstha tried to do its bit against the grabbing of the said landed properties but to no effect".*

This abundantly makes clear as to how Hindus were harassed, their survival and living was made near impossible, their religious sentiments injured and the existence of their religious places threatened. The pamphlet was issued for general information about the odds faced by the Hindus in maintaining the important and the oldest shrine like Jagat Amba Chakraishwari, which is, according to a Kashmir legend, linked up with the origin of Kashmir. The President of the Sanstha further throws light on the condition of another piece of land of the shrine close to it and says:

"—In order to protect this piece of land the Sanastha managed to station at the Sept-reshi shrine some Sanyasies but they were dubbed as C.I.D agents and beaten away by the elements eager to take over this piece of land. Even the tin shed constructed for the Sanyasies was dismantled and the corrugated sheets taken away".

Every Hindu in Kashmir is suspected to be a C.I.D and many supposed agents of India have been killed in a large number. The old saying "give a dog a bad name and kill him" has been followed in the case of Hindus.

As against this, no mosque or Muslim shrine or religious property has been ever touched by any non-Muslim. The government has also been helping in the construction or renovation of the mosques and even allowing them funds for the purpose..

> *"The Jammu and Kashmir government has sanctioned supply of timber valuing Rs.70,000/-free of cost, in favour of Idara Auqaf-i-Islamia for Hazratbal shrine next year.*
>
> *The shrine is presently being renovated according to a Rs.50 lakh plan as approved by Sheikh Abdullah, the Auqaf Chief".*[133]

Another form of Islamisaton and spread of Muslim culture was to construct mosques any where without any hindrance or obstruction. The interested persons could lay their hands on any piece of land and without permission and without objection, could go in for construction of a mosque and raise the structure. The Government itself did it and prompted Muslims to do it.

In Jawaharnagar, a government colony in Srinagar, the Muslims were given a plot of land for construction of a mosque and the same was constructed. Jawaharnagar colony was mostly inhabited by non Muslims who were not allotted any plot for construction of temple.The adjoining plot belonged to Shyam Lal Sadhu, Principal of a Government Degree College, Srinagar. One day he brought building material on his land to start construction of his house. The Muslims came, defied all those who had come, manhandled and chased them away. His dumped material was also allegedly grabbed along with the land which was forcibly annexed to the Mosque notwithstanding the best efforts of Sadhu to get it back and raise a construction.

The Hindus of Jawaharnagar could not get land for cremation in the vicinity. They finally selected a piece of land for cremation in a nearby place. It could not be, however, got possession of, as that was not allowed by Muslims to be used as cremation ground. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah proposed the construction of a mosque even inside the New Secretariat, Srinagar. And he went ahead with his proposal but it fell through because of his sad demise. His son-in-law and Chief

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[133] *The Indian Express, July 19, 1971.*

Minister, Ghulam Mohamed Shah, took the project in hand. He was also very keen for construction of mosques and encouraged others as well to build mosques at the places they selected. He also gave a green signal for building a mosque inside the premises of Kashmir University Naseembagh, adjoining Hazratbal, Srinagar.

Chief Minister G.M. Shah started the construction of a mosque inside the Secretariat in Jammu also and that too on the debris of an ancient temple. It invoked tremendous resentment among Hindus and raised a serious conflict and controversy. The Hindus wanted to stop the construction on the temple site and shift the raising of the mosque to some other place.

> *"Jammu and Kashmir Saini Sabha has claimed that the premises of an ancient temple is located inside the New Secretariat. The premises was transferred to them by Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Sabha has demanded that the construction of a mosque on the premises of temple be stopped and the landfor construction of mosque be made available at some other place where Muslim brethren would offer "Nimaz"*[134]

Soon thereafter, the Shah regime came to an end and the proposal of a mosque for the Secretariat fell through.

A secessionist Muslim militant organisation called "Alfatah" was also operating actively in Kashmir Valley from the sixties to February, 1975 when Sheikh Abdullah was again bestowed with power. The members of this organisation used to indulge in disruptive activities coupled with violence, aimed at weakening and snapping ties with India by creating an atmosphere of horror and terror. They were supported by Pakistan and worked against India. They generally planted bombs at selected places which used to create a stir momentarily. Their arms and ammunition dumps were seized by the police at Barsoo and other places in the Valley and many of them were arrested too. The report of the Cabinet Sub Committee says about Alfatah:

> *"The aim and objective of 'Alfatah' was to separate Kashmir from India and to bring its forcible Accession with Pakistan. The members of 'Alfatah' had created a lot of unrest in the Kashmir Valley by committing robberies ,dacoities and arson. Mr. Nazir Ahamed Wani , an Agriculture Assistant who at one time had served as a Government employee was one of the top leaders of 'Alfatah'. Believing that 'Alfatah' is not in a position to continue its activities in the face of tremendous pressure from Police. Mr. Nazir Ahamed Wani formed another secessionist organisation to achieve the objectives of 'Alfatah'. This organisation was formed some time in the year 1974 and was called 'People's Political League'. Mr. Nazir Ahamed Wani, however, could not be arrested and ultimately succeeded in running over to Pakistan. The National Liberation Front*

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134. The Awaz-i-Jammu, January 3, 1986.

and the People's Political League have been operating in unison with each other in and outside the state of Jammu and Kashmir" [135]

A resident of Rehbaba Sahib, Srinagar, Shyam Lal Dhar (now deceased) was made a victim of murderous attack by Alfatah members in his own house. He was an Amin-i-Adalat (Draughtsman in the Court). Three Alfatah men entered his house one evening on the plea of having some professional work with him. He was sitting in his room in the ground floor. They were attired in army dresses and impersonated as Indian Army Officers. He believed them to be so.

They started chatting and asked him in Hindustani (though they were later learnt to be Kashmiri Muslims) as to why he was writing in Urdu when the language in Bharat was Hindi. It was perhaps to provoke him to say something which they would take as an affront. Shyam Lal Dhar, however; replied them with a clear mind and in all sincerity that Hindi was not the official language of Kashmir. "*It was Urdu which had been in vogue from the days of Dogra rule here*", he replied and added. "*As such, all writing work was done in Kashmir in Urdu*", he explained, least doubting their identity and intentions. The fake captain then suddenly took out his sword to kill him. He cried to his nephews for help and jumped out of the open window, in his courtyard. The inmates of the house at once responded his call and rushed to his help. His head hit by the sword was profusely bleeding. The assailants fled in the darkness. He was immediately removed to Hospital and saved. This episode occurred only some time after the Hindu agitation against conversion of Parmaishwari to Islam was quelled in 1967. This conversion was also a part of an over all conspiracy against Hindus and to create a vicious atmosphere in the Valley. [136]

This Alfatah occurrence created a great panic in the entire area of the down town. It was to be judged in the background of non-violent and peace loving nature of the people as the city was free from such incidents which were unheard of in Kashmir. It smacked of something uncommon, unusual and sounded a warning bell. It heralded a dangerous trend in Kashmir and the people particularly Hindus became scared. On the surface appeared one thing and under the surface another.

The Police initially gave out the motive of the incident as theft, which Hindus and Muslims of the area did not agree to. A gentleman with humble means that the victim was, could not be made a target for theft. The Police investigation eventually revealed that it was not a theft case but a part of the programme of

135. Report of the Cabinet sub-Committee constituted by the Jammu and Kashmir Government vide order dated July, 7, 1984. 136. Mr Shyam Lal Dhar was living in the vicinity of author's old neighbourhood. After he had recouped, he narrated the above facts to me. He and other house holders, disposed off their entire property thereafter and shifted to other areas of the city for safety. Such individual shiftings have finally become forced mass migration of Kashmiri Hindus for safety, from the Valley, to Jammu and other parts of the country.

violence undertaken by 'Alfatah' to create an atmosphere of horror and terror. In connection with the above incident, the police arrested some 'Alfatah' militants and prosecuted them in the Court which finally acquitted them. In the same area in October, 1990, a young doctor Shiban Koul and his wife as well as his young cousin Rajinder Koul along with his wife were brutally killed by the militants inside their own house. They had chosen not to migrate and had stayed back.

With Sheikh Abdullah again assuming power in February 1975, 'Alfatah' youths were also absorbed in different departments of the Government. The P.A to Revenue Minister Mirza Mohamed Afzal Baig was also taken and appointed from among the 'Alfatah' gang. Before coming to power, Plebiscite Front was supporting 'Alfatah' men and movement. As a consequence to the Accord, the Alfatah youths received their moiety of power and wielded influence in the government. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi also had extended her helping hand to them.

It was a night in the passing winter of 1975, when emergency was in force throughout the country, a gang of 'Alfatah' numbering over a dozen, attacked us at our hired place of dwelling. These young men forcibly broke open the entrance door of the staircase leading to the upper residential storey of the house, situated at Gogjibagh Srinagar. They came up and started breaking open the approach door of our storey. I and other occupants resisted it. We were taken unawares in this attack, apparently there was no reason for it. Commotion ensued, the door collapsed and a forcible kick from the intruders was received by my sister-in-law, Raj Dulari, as she was actively resisting the attack that hit her abdomen. Her husband, Poshkar Nath Koul Vakil, was some months before arrested by the Kashmir Government under Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and was suffering detention in Central Jail, Srinagar. The bold lady fell semi unconscious.[137] Rest of us continued to resist this unprovoked and sudden attack.

In the annexy within the same compound, another Kashmiri Hindu family lived. They immediately rushed to help. A few others also came there and intervened in the scuffle. I did not, however, let them in. Nevertheless I was pained to identify a Muslim lawyer, leading this gang of intruders, who was an anti Indian and connected with Alfatah. I immediately lodged a complaint telephonically with the police control room. The police arrived on the spot and saw things for themselves. They took all the intruders along with them. That time we came to know that they were negotiating with the land lord, S.N. Gupta of Jammu, for purchase of that entire property and that they wanted to get the possession vacated before the agreed amount was paid to him. The impending transaction was in favour of Shawl brothers, Alfatah activists.

This property could not be sold as the structures were standing on Nazool

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137. Mrs. Raj Dulari developed cancer later and passed away within a couple of years, despite prolong treatments in Delhi and Bombay.

land. The land lord Gupta was frustrated as the government had not renewed his lease, despite his best efforts, like all other Hindu lessees in the Valley, nor the Municipality had permitted him to raise the compound wall. It was rarely and that too with oblique motives that lease was renewed in favour of Hindu lessees. Baring a few Hindus, Government snatched demised land from all Hindus or as an alternative, they were forced to dispose off their structures and the land to the Muslims who got the land later regularised in their favour.

Ministers, Ghulam Mohamed Shah, (N.C). Mangat Ram Sharma (Congress Jammu) and Hakim Habib Ullah (N.C) wanted the police to enforce law and order. They all wrote to me in this behalf, while acknowledging my protest.

I was later told that the assailants were Alfatah men and we also wanted to go in for this deal. But this property could not be disposed off to us under the circumstances. Mirza Afzal Baig and others in the government were, therefore, openly supporting them. That incident was not the end of the onslaught on us. It was only the beginning. A series of attacks on us followed. The widowed Panditani and her family members living in the Annexy were also attacked and finally ousted. We resisted for long, though Emergency had created a suffocating atmosphere and the government in general and the police in particular were helping these 'Alfatah' men. Meanwhile Poshkar Nath Koul Vakil was released and another violent attack was made in which he, our mother and other inmates were injured. Mother lost her 'dejhoroo' also.[138]

When I came to know in my office about this attack on my said place of dwelling, I went straightway to see the S.S.P. Srinagar regarding it. A journalist friend of mine, Mohamed Hanneef Perwaz Quraishi, met me and helped me locate the S. S.P. who was at his residence. I met Abdul Samed Khan, a relation of Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah, who had taken over some time before as S. S.P. Srinagar. He appeared to me a decent man.

I narrated to him the details and expressed my grievance. He enquired from the concerned police division officer Avtar Krishan about the incident. He confirmed the attack having been made on my home people, on wireless. S.S.P. Abdul Samad Khan then told us to go as he would look into the matter himself. We got up and were about to leave his place when he said to me. "*No Muslim is safe in India, then how do you expect you can be safe here*". Perwaz Qurishi looked amazingly at the S.S.P. I then swiftly turned my eyes from Khan and then looked at Parwaz and left the place without uttering a word. Parwaz followed me. Outside Khan's residence Parwaz expressed his shock and we parted in distress. It was a sort of warning to all Hindus of Kashmir, who were held as hostages. The English proverb "coming events cast their shadows before" was perhaps aptly applicable to

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[138] "Dejhoroo" is a golden ornament, used by Kashmiri Pandit lady as a token of consecration of her marriage.

these"shadows".

Crisis had already cropped up, it was deepening. Nobody outside was perceiving it, though indications were clear and constant. People were sitting on a simmering volçano, not knowing when it was to burst and what was to happen?

It was not even a question of vacating the possession nor of getting compensation for vacating the same as had become the practice, though I was asked to compromise and was offered compensation through some of my acquaintances after stiff resistance was offered, which, however, I spurned always with anger. My fight was not against any person but it was a principled fight to decide whether law abiding citizens could live and be protected in Kashmir? Whether the police in particular and the government in general, accorded a fair deal to the peace loving citizens in Kashmir? It was, therefore, not an individual case before me but a test case whether Hindus in Kashmir could live there honourably or not? The reply to these questions had a bearing on the future of Hindu community in Kashmir. It was not, therefore, so simple for me to surrender the possession on the ground of force used and to submit to hooliganism supported by state power or to compromise and accept the "compensation".

The police did nothing in the matter but worked against us. We, therefore, contacted all other concerned high officers, including the then DIG police Ghulam Jeelani Pandit, who was meanwhile elevated from SSP Srinagar to DIG police Kashmir (lately was working as D.G. Police) and I.G.P. P. A Rosha, Divisional Commissioner Noor Mohamed(later retired as Chief Secretary), to seek redressal of our grievances, and treat us as citizens of the land, but without any consequence. Ghulam Jeelani Pandit was plainly told that the local police was joining hands with the opposite party. He was, therefore, requested to post a Police guard of non-Kashmiri Police personnel on the spot. He resented it and did not agree to our proposal. The Divisional Commissioner finally declined to intervene in the matter on the plea that the Police had informed him it was our private matter.

We thought P.A. Rosha was an I.P.S Officer and having come from outside the state, he might not succumb to local influence and pressure. But our impression was wrong and he proved good for nothing. The ministers who had taken some interest in the matter, also became oblivious to the issue. Attacks on us and our resistance gained currency and some showed sympathy with us. Peer Ghiyasud Din, a former minister, expressed openly in the Bar on the basis of his personal information, that lawlessness and Vandalism of an acute type was let loose against us and a horrible situation was being faced by us. He and Noor Mohammad, also a former minister, suggested me to see Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah, as he alone could give us justice and stop the rowdyism. They in fact, out of sympathy, insisted me several times to see the Sheikh. I told my brother about it and the appointment was fixed. We both met the Chief Minister and apprised him of the facts and the situation. He categorically refused to interfere in the matter. "This is the age of survival of the fittest. The fittest only will survive" said the Sheikh.

I was baffled to hear this sermon. Should minority members organise gundaism and fight out the onslaughts of the majority members like ruffians? Were Hindus no longer in a position to live as respectable and law abiding citizens? These thoughts pervaded me. It was an irritant from the Chief Minister but I remained sober and did not react. Poshkar Nath Koul Vakil, however, rightly recoiled: "*We are talking to the Chief Minister of the State and not to Sheikh Abdullah. The trial of strength will create disharmony and bring the two communities on headlong collision*", he told the Sheikh and continued. "*How can members of the small minority fight the hoodlums who are in a large number and are aided by the Police*". The Sheikh again clung to his stand, "*It is not my headache*", he replied. The Chief Minister's stand was countered in order to persuade him again to see reason in the complaint for bringing the offenders to book. "*You are abdicating your powers . It is your duty to establish the rule of law and protect the members of minority community from vandalism of the members of Muslim majority*", said Poshkar Nath forcibly. The Chief Minister again replied but now with apparent rancour. "*I have told you that I will not interfere in the matter*". Poshkar Nath lost his temper and said to him . "*you are first a rank communalist. I knew that you would not do anything*".

Poshker Nath 's tongue was candid and tone piercing and then he addressed me, "*I had told you that I would not come as he was a staunch communalist*", he saidloudly . The Chief Minister stood up from his chair and shouted at Poshkar Nath. "I will again get you arrested", "Do whatever you like", the latter shouted back I had seen for the first time my brother losing his temper to such an extent and asserting himself for vindication of his honour and right so boldly.

On hearing this clamour in the lawn where the three of us were sitting, security forces, and Mir Mustafa (who has been killed by the terrorists during current militancy in Kashmir) came out rushing from the Chief Minister's main building. I caught the hand of my brother and took him out.I was unusually calm and sober in the face of such a provocation from the Chief Minister, perhaps for the first time in my life.

We then met Governor L. K. Jha and narrated to him the facts of the case and requested him to intervene as head of the State and to ask the government to maintain law and order and bring the offenders to book. But he showed his reluctance. "I thought you had come to pay me a courtesy call", said he and added," I will see if I can do anything".

It has been unfortunate for Kashmir that most of the Governors deputed here, and even officers, came to have recess and enjoy rather than work and prove their mettle, if they had any. They by and large were keen to invigorate themselves by taking fresh air and clean water of Chashmeshahi and relish 'ghushtaba' and other hospitality. I would often find L.K. Jha in a Hotel awaiting service of complementary lunch or dinner. But the exception has been there. They had a sense of responsibility and duty. They never bothered for, nor were ever lured by "Ghushtaba' or "hospitality". Amongst them is Governor Jag Mohan. He stands out as a luminous star, unmatched and unsurpassed so far.

After dressing up one morning, ready to leave to join the 'Barat' of one of our relations, an attack was again launched. Our water tap was disconnected from the ground, and we were virtually placed under wrongful confinement inside and under the seige outside. Our exit passage was obstructed. I phoned the police and a van came with about a dozen Police constables on board, headed by Police Division Officer Rajbagh, Radha Krishan. He came up and asked us to show him where the water tap was disconnected. We came down with him and the moment we stepped on the compound, the opposite party attacked us. It was in fact a Police conspiracy to arrest us. But the most shameful thing was that while we tried to resist the attack and defend ourselves, the Police also pounced upon us and I slipped on the mud. I fell down, my pant and coat got drenched in the mud. The Police arrested us there and then and told us that our arrest was under MISA and took us to the Police Station Shergarhi. Instead of joining the Barat, the Police led us to 'Hawalat'. We could not do anything as it was the period of Emergency. We had to put up, therefore, with the Police excesses and high-handedness.

Some of my relations immediately came to know about this high-handedness of police, desiring us to surrender the possession. One of the relations had gone to the S.S.P. Srinagar and lodged a protest with him on the police behaviour. Others came to the Police Station and discussed our arrest with the officers there. They assured the Police that the premises would be vacated within a couple of days. When they met me and told me about their commitment, I resented, rigid and unbending as I was, I refused to agree with them and to abide by their commitment. I told them that it was not a simple matter of vacation of the premises.

What was significant, was the method of ouster and the manner of working of the Kashmir government as well as its impact on the peace loving citizens and their future in Kashmir. I wanted to pass some more time in the hope that Emergency might be lifted some day so that I could fight them out on various fronts with full vigour. But I was persuaded that the fight would not yield anything. "Principles have no value in Kashmir which had become worse than Pakistan for Hindus", they tried to canvass me. It did not, therefore, make any sense to fight 'Alfatah' people in Kashmir, who were supported by the government. Nobody bothers for "idealism". they wanted to avert any mishap in the immediate future, they explained. On the parity of their reasoning and persuasion, I relented.

It was not a compromise with the opposite party but a unilateral decision taken, of course under Police pressure. They accordingly informed the Police and we were then produced before the Executive Magistrate, B.N. Jalali (Assistant Commissioner) at about 4 P.M. under sections 107/151/Cr.P.C instead of detaining us under MISA.Persons connected with the legal profession and others were astonished to see me in police custody in that condition. They particularly pointed out to my muddy suit and enquired about the matter. I could not tell them anything and avoided a reply as I regarded it as "death" of a lawyer. My brother, however, told them that the incident was a writing of the time, and formed a page of the history of Kashmir. I have preserved this page which I am giving out to the nation now with some other details. The Executive Magistrate was also surprised to see us in that condition and set us at liberty at once on personal recognizance.

Apart from 'Alfatah' episodes, the general tendency of treating Hindus as second grade citizens and at times even non-entities, was on increase and such examples were galore. Members of a Hindu family of Jawaharnagar, Srinagar were often harassed and attacked with the support of some gundas. Their main source of trouble was that one of their relations, had converted to Islam and married a Muslim boy. Musrat Jhan as Reeta Koul was called after conversion to Islam, wanted to snatch illegally and forcibly possession of their house. Even some of the Muslims of other vicinity mounted attacks on this helpless Hindu family. Dejected as he was, the Karta of the family submitted a representation dated April 22, 1980 to the President of India, for protection and justice. This representation among other things, reads:

> *"On the night of 12th April 1980 all the aforesaid persons along with a group of gundas made an organised attack on our house, forcibly trying to snatch our possession——— while this big gang was able to break the outer door and entered the courtyard trying to break open forcibly the entrance doors of the house.*
>
> *——Police seemed to be partial and under influence of the opposite*
> *side; and atmosphere of lawlessness and communal tension was allowed*
> *to grow much as a small procession of Muslim ladies and some gundas*
> *from Saraiballa came to attack us on 13th April, 1980. They also shouted*
> *even in presence of the Police that Pandits would not be allowed to live*
> *even in presence of the Police that Pandits would not be allowed to live*

Similar representation dated June 14, 1980 was submitted by him in a
hapless condition, to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as well.

From the house and land of Dr. Vidya Bhushan (now deceased) situated at
Indranagar, (Badamibagh Cantonments, Srinagar), a long standing tenant, Vijay
Tuli and his family, was forcibly ejected a couple of years back by a Muslim villager
who grabbed it. 'The Victims' tried to resist the onslaught but for how long? They

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[139] *These representations were sent by eldest member of the family, Mr. Sodharshan Koul, a humble and a respectable citizen of Srinagar.*

had to surrender finally. I, however, avoid to make a reference in this book about the horrible facts of discrimination meted out in this area to the Hindus by the Central Government and Cantonment Board, whereas in the case of others, it was a question of "politics" and so viewed the matters and accordingly granted them the facilities and liberties.

This was the fate of the members of Hindu community, holding humble or high positions or belonging to any class or category. The cream of the society was therefore, no exception. Secretary Bar Association Srinagar, Moti Lal Bhat Advocate (now Justice Moti Lal Bhat) was, for instance, forcibly dispossessed from his office at Srinagar, before his elevation to the Bench, and his books were thrown out on the roadside. He filed cases for attachment of the premises etc., in the Court but had to compromise ultimately with his Muslim landlord as the atmosphere for Hindus was getting evidently hostile, leaving hardly any scope for counterblast resistance by the members of a small and peaceful Hindu community. This also happened during the Sheikh regime.

Likewise the possession of office premises of Advocate, Sunil Hali, was forcibly snatched in Srinagar by his Muslim landlord and thereafter had it cleared of his books, furniture etc, about three years back. He had to rush to Jammu immediately and got an interim direction for DIG Police of Kashmir from Jammu wing of High Court, to restore him the possession till disposal of his case. Another Advocate, Kulbhushan Raina ignored the warning of his Muslim landlord to vacate the possession of his office, close to the court premises. The result was that some three years back, he was one day forcibly dragged out of his small office in broad day light, by some persons, saying that he had not vacated the possession. He was murderously attacked in the busy market and fell unconscious on the roadside. Thinking that he was dead, the assailants fled from the spot. One of his clients and some passers by found him bleeding profusely, removed and admitted him to the hospital. His life was thus saved.

It openly happened even with those who as lawyers, constituted an important focal point of the society and who were expected to defend the rights of the people but were themselves helpless and defenceless victims of communal and anti India wave in Kashmir. When it happened with them, it could and it did happen with many other members of the Hindu community.

Suffocation permeated the atmosphere of the Valley. Peace was vitiated at Baramulla when a section of local Muslims agitated against a small book written by Tej Bahadur Bhan published in early eighties, demanding its ban and arrest of the author. He was, therefore, arrested and detained under Public Safety Act. He could neither be bailed out nor was released by the Government for fear of recurrence of Muslim resentment and agitation. The book had nothing blasphemous and dealt with evolution of man on the basis of Darwin's theory. But the Muslims took it as an affront being not consistent with Muslim theology. Bhan was indefinitely detained under Muslim pressure. Kashmir has become a Muslim monopoly place, where others cannot freeely live, think and express, however secular and progressive he may be. It was Madho Dhandavate, leader of Janata Parliamentary Party, who raised this issue after some time in Parliament and then the helpless and innocent author was set at liberty.[140] The Hindus as residents were first languishing individually in Kashmir, they are bewailing collectively outside the Valley as "migrants" now.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had usurped the jurisdiction of the Courts also. He had started his private Court in his private office where he would get the cases decided as he wished, through his P.R.O. and other agencies. One Razi Hussan of Lucknow, just to quote an instance, has settled in Kashmir. He had married in Kashmir. After one or two children were born out of this wedlock, his wife instituted a suit for dissolution of marriage against her husband in the Court of First Additional Munsiff, Srinagar. Her husband resisted the suit. His mother-in-law reportedly contacted Sheikh Abdullah in this regard and the Sheikh directed the Police to obtain divorce from Razi Hassan. Without allowing the suit to proceed any further in the Court of law, the police obtained divorce from her husband under duress much against his wishes.

On the complaint of one Haji against a Hindu contractor regarding some alleged civil transaction, the later was summoned through DIG Police. He was traced out at Gulmarg, and was required to be present before the Chief Minister's P.R.O on specified date and time. He felt embarrassed and harassed and did not want to appear before him. He engaged me and I appeared on his behalf before the Chief Minister's P.R.O Mukhtar Kanth on the appointed day. He objected to the non-appearance of my client. I came to know that the Chief Minister's private office was already seized of many cases of various natures. These matters were not at all falling within the administrative sphere of Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Minister, nor in any case, merited administrative interference and decision. It was neither a substitute for judicial Courts, nor for the "Shariat Courts", but was a special Court of the "Sultanate of Sheikh Abdullah". Anybody having access to Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah could get his case referred by him to his private office for disposal,

I produced Vakalatnama executed by my client and expressed to the P.R.O to keep it on the record, conscious though I was, that that was not the forum where I should have produced it, I then challenged his powers to proceed with the matter. I further told him that no jurisdiction vested in him or the Chief minister, nor I conceded one. I therefore, requested him to drop the case or else I would file a writ

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[140]. Mr. Tej Bhadur Bhan is an Urdu short story writer and has lefileanings and was made a target for his Urdu book "Pehchan". He was Assistant Engineer posted at Baramulla and is currently a forced migrant, living somewhere in Delhi.

petition in the High Court against him as well as against the Chief Minister. He then dismissed the case. What is happening in Kashmir today, is the inevitable result of the policies, trends and tendencies that persisted yesterday? What is to come tomorrow, is what is being shaped today.

CHAPTER XV

Discord after Accord

The Central Government and Congress Party appeared hopeful of the success of the Accord made between Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and the Central Government. By virtue of this Accord, as already mentioned, power vested in the Sheikh and he again came at the helm of the affairs. Devolution of power on him and revival of his National Conference was apparently aimed at burying the Accession issue in the dead past. To determine the success or failure of the Accord in Kashmir, was not and could not be dependable on the length of period that the Sheikh or his National Conference ruled the state. But it has to be adjudged in terms of the result it yielded and the impact it created. What relations Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah or his successors in office maintained or developed with the Centre was of course, a factor to be considered, if not the sole criteria, for evaluating its success or otherwise?

The relationship between the rulers of Kashmir and that of the Centre meant obviously, therefore, not relationship between the Congress or any particular party in the Centre, and National Conference in Kashmir but between the powers in the Centre and in Kashmir that be. It could not be changed with the change in Party in power. For purpose of Kashmir, however, the dominating position of Sheikh Abdullah, his offshoots and his National Conference was regarded as sufficient guarantee for moulding the public opinion and improving the situation in Kashmir, to conform to the Accord and to cement the link between Kashmir andthe rest of the country. How the Sheikh conducted himself to adhere to the Accord faithfully, was to be gauged in this background and a glimpse of it may be found in the preceding pages.

Dr. Farooq succeeded the Sheikh as Chief Minister in 1982. Central Government ensured his safe and smooth installation as Chief Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Governor B.K. Nehru invited him on his own for taking oath of office as the next Chief Minister, immediately on demise of his father-Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, without undergoing the other formalities to be observed before the swearing in ceremony. He was groomed by his father in the State politics by vacating Presidentship of National Conference in his favour. He had also inducted him in the Government in his life time as Minister of State for Health. It was a clear indication from Sheikh Abdullah that he wanted to bypass his son-in-law Ghulam Mohamad Shah, who was already a Cabinet Minister in his Government, and signified his preference for his son to succeed him.

Around mid sixties, Dr. Farooq had left the State and settled in England. He married there and acquired British citizenship and had also held a British passport.

He developed links with anti India elements in England and worked for cessation of the State from Indian Union. His younger brother, Tariq Abdullah was also in England and he too had given up the citizenship of India and was employed in Pakistan Embassy there. He as well, worked for Pakistan and against India. Dr. Farooq visited Pakistan on British passport in connection with his anti India activities. The State Cabinet sub-Committee says in its report: [141]

> *"He (Dr. Farooq) went on a tour to Pakistan on a special invitation extended to him by Mohamed Maqbool Bhat, the leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front who had organised a convention in May, 1974 in Pakistan. During that trip to Pakistan Dr. Farooq Abdullah was accorded reception in all the major towns of Pakistan such as Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi etc. He had during this trip created contacts with the leaders of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, a well known secessionist organisation which is engaged in an endeavour to bring about secession of Jammu and Kashmir from Indian Union and its annexation to Pakistan".* [142]

Dr. Farooq Abdullah had also toured Pakistan occupied area of Kashmir, called 'Azad Kashmir' and established a rapport with anti India forces there. It was done with the aim of developing a common understanding, if not a common programme to work in collaboration with them as far as possible, for wrecking the Accession of Kashmir to India. The Cabinet sub-committee further reported the following to the State Government after verification of records and collecting information from Intelligence and other sources :

> *"It has further been brought to the notice of the Committee that one Dr. Farooq was incharge of the headquarters of the National Liberation Front at Rawalpindi. The bearer of the office of the organisation was under the charge of Mr. Amanullah Khan whereas Mr. Maqbool Bhat was the Chief of the organization. In 1976 Mr. Maqbool Bhat along with two other associates namely Riaz Ahmed and Abdul Hamid infiltrated into the valley. He had meetings with various members of the people's League, particularly those who had been trained at the National Liberation Front headquarters at Rawalpindi".* [143]

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front was keen to expand its organisational network in Kashmir. After Beg Sarthaparthy dialogue over Kashmir started, the Front clarified that the negotiations would not affect their activities and

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141. The J & K State Cabinet Sub-Committee was headed by the then Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Devi Das Thakur.

142. Report of the J & K State Cabinet Sub-committee constiuted vide the State Government order dated July, 10, 1984.

143. Ibid.

movement.Services of Dr. Farooq Abdullah were also utilized to explain the importance of the above dialogue to the people of Pakistan as he had also joined J & K Liberation Front and was one of its leaders. The Cabinet Sub-committee of the State Government further revealed in its report as under:

> *"In his statement to the State authorities Mohamed Maqbool Bhat immediately after his arrest in 1976 had disclosed that in 1974, a dialogue between Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah and Prime Minister through their representatives Mirza Mohamed Afzal Beg and Shri. G. Parthasarathy had created doubts and apprehensions in the minds of public as well as in the official circles in Pakistan that Sheikh Sahib was planning to sell the State to Government of India. With a view to dispel these doubts Dr. Farooq Abdullah was asked by Mohamed Maqbool Bhat and his colleagues to devote the public speeches to impress upon other Pakistanis that Sheikh Sahib was continuing his efforts for the right of self-determination and the Accord which could be reached between the Sheikh and the Prime Minister was meant only to get into power and thereby accelerate the process for attaining the right of self-determination. Mr. Bhat had further stated in his statement before the State authorities that Dr. Abdullah had dispelled the doubts of the people to a large extent. After the convention Mr. Bhat had stated that Dr. Farooq Abdullah had an exclusive meeting with the late Shri. Z.A. Bhutto but Dr. Abdullah had not divulged to Shri Bhat as to what was discussed between the two. Another fact which is not disputed that Dr. Abdullah had himself taken and administered to others the oath of allegiance and dedication to the cause of so called liberation of Kashmir. The photograph showing Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Aman-Ullah Khan and Hashim Qureshi administering oath have been published by the press and is not in dispute".* [144]

Dr. Farooq Abdullah vigorously followed his plans of liberating Kashmir by instigating the people, who had treated Accession to India, by and large, as fait accompli: It was bound to generate anti India and communal feelings in the people whom he addressed to. He had gone to England where he engaged himself in anti India activities and gave up Indian citizenship.

> *"He (Dr. Farooq) went over to England for higher education in Medicine some time in mid sixties, where he acquired British citizenship. He returned to India when Accord had been reached at. While in England, he engaged himself in anti-Indian activities in collaboration with various Pro-Pak and Anti Indian organizations........he paid a short visit to Kashmir in 1974. He made highly objectionable speeches in Srinagar and other places instigating the people to rise in revolt......He pleaded for*

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[144]. Report of the J & K State Cabinet Sub-Committee.

Indian citizenship which was granted to him by the Government of India because of the peculiar circumstances in which the Government of India was placed as a result of Kashmir accord".[145]

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, therefore, adorned the office of state Chief Minister with dubious political past. He came back to Kashmir only when his father became Chief Minister of the State. After having lost the State subject right, he could not, as such dream to become even an M.L.A, not to speak of assuming the office of Chief Minister. He appeared to have remained loyal and steadfast to the oath taken in Pakistan. He did the mischief and fulfilled the oath, in Kashmir and went back to England in 1990 for a long period, leaving behind exploited Kashmiris in lurch. He went beyond the reach of Governor Jag Mohan and returned to India after he was changed.

After entering into Accord, Sheikh Abdullah and his successors in office appeared to have acted upon the assurance given by Dr. Farooq Abdullah to the people of Pakistan that the process for right to self determination would be "accelerated". Instead of threatening the bonds of kinship between Kashmir and rest of the country, these were weakened and things have come to such a pass that the pro-India elements are on the verge of liquidation; firstly, at the hands of terrorists as they are bent upon to crush them in Kashmir, secondly, at the hands of Government of India, which is keen to enter into a dialogue with the terrorists in order to have some package deal with them, due to their incapacity and incapability to handle Kashmir. They seem to stoo plow to retain Kashmir with India for name sake only. With the passage of time that nominal link will also get dissolved. In other words, it means that without exercising the right to self determination, they were to bear the fruit of self-determination. National Conference had, therefore, achieved within a couple of years what Plebiscite Front could not achieve in 22 years. Pro-India elements could not live honourably and safely in Kashmir after the Sheikh's Accord, how can they now stay there after another Accord with terrorists? This is what has been achieved by pursuing the policy of liberalization and the Accord reached.

Dissentions on the fundamental issues were persisting in Kashmir from the very out set. The only difference has been that some times, such elements were either dormant or subdued and other times, they were active and found the time opportune to strike. In the period following the Accord, the pro Accessionists have found no respite and the anti national, secessionist and disruptive forces as well as Muslim fundamentalists, have found breeding place and congenial atmosphere to rear and grow. Fully incubated, the wide spread gangs of militants with the present terrorism, appeared on the political scene of Kashmir as a terrific and swelling force to reckon with.

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145. Dev-Batrohi "July' 84 events in Kashmir" -Publication by Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Information.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, brought a unique distinction to himself. After he returned to power in 1977 election, he asked all of his Ministers to take an oath of loyalty and allegiance to his person. A queer instance indeed. it was not in keeping with the spirit of parliamentary democracy, nor was in line with the provisions of law and the Constitution. It was a novel introduction and contribution to the world of Parliamentary democracy. He surpassed the norms of monarchy also. A minister can take an oath of secrecy and office, an oath for bearing true faith and allegiance to the Constitution and the law of the land. Taking oath of allegiance and loyalty to the person of a Chief Minister, was, therefore, against the provisions of law and the Constitution. It had negated the sanctity and value of the oath taken under the provisions of law; any Minister who would not have undertaken this oath of personal allegiance to the Sheikh, was to have been dropped from the Council of Ministers. It throws a lot of light on working of the mind of Sheikh Abdullah on the one hand, and helplessness of these Ministers and their lack of conviction, courage and independence, on the other.

Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah had followed the policy of "*derecognition*" against the non-Muslims in Kashmir when he resumed power. He inducted to the ministry those non-Muslims who had either retired long before from the Government service or were some how still connected with it. They were thrust on the people as representatives of the non-Muslim communities. His effort was to cause political demoralisation in the ranks of the Hindu community for carrying on their politics and political activities, as they were not quite appreciative of his stand. During his politically way laid period and for the period he patronised Plebiscite Front, hardly any non-Muslim was with him. As such, he had to look for his individual allies among these communities in 1975 and foisted them on the public. The persons were picked up from the retired cadre of government servants whom he thought might remain more obliged, loyal and faithful than those who were in active politics, since decades. Sheikh Abdullah wanted to discourage Hindus, particularly of Kashmir, and their politics and the political plurality in order to have a tamed monolith party politics to avoid and avert any political disagreement within the ministry, on his perilous designs and dictatorial functioning or on carrying out or enacting any controversial measures, such as, Resettlement Bill. He filled up the void in his revived National Conference subsequently by such persons.

Soon after assumption of office of Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah publicly accorded a dingy treatment to all the Ministers, who were also in the preceding ministry of his father, and announced their dismissal only after four days of the Sheikh's demise. Giving their dismissal a touch of despise, he declared their dismissal in their presence on "*unflattering reputation*" before the mob assembled for the condolence meeting that was held in Srinagar to pay homage to the Sheikh. After change over in the Ministry, the new government, implicitly expressed grievance over the induction of new Ministers. A government publication said:

> *"A new Council of Ministers, which did not include even a single member of the erstwhile Council of Ministers, was sworn in Raj Bhawan on 14th September, 1982. The team of his Cabinet colleagues consisted of the stuff rejected by his father in 1977".*[146]

Dr. Farooq Abdullah did not agree with the bad motives attributed to their dismissal and different views expressed by them. He wanted to have new faces with an untarnished reputation. He clarified this after he was dislodged in 1984. He made an announcement of dismissal of the Ministers in the condolence meeting.

> *"The differences between Srinagar and Delhi were fuelled by some senior members of our National Conference. Soon after I took over as Chief Minister I decided to jettison old members of Sheikh Sahib's Cabinet and pick up new faces. There were two reasons for it. Most of the colleagues of Sheikh Sahib, over the years, had earned a reputation which was not very flattering.*
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> *.........I felt that as a Chief Minister I should take some steps which would prove to my people that I meant business and that I wished to start with a clean slate........Then I announced that I intended to drop all the old ministers and take new faces. I was lucky that the people acclaimed, applauded and appreciated this. They were very surprised and they considered it a gift they never expected. I was able to get rid of all of them in one stroke. The second reason for the change was that I was certain that the old colleagues of my father would try and dominate me and wash away whatever good I wanted to do".*[147]

Dr. Farooq wanted a free hand to go ahead with his sinister activities and to discredit India in Kashmir. He, therefore, did not like a vigil from senior Cabinet colleagues inside the Government. After their dismissal, his relations with New Delhi should have improved and differences sunk as he had attributed to them the responsibility for widening the gulf between Srinagar and New Delhi. It did not happen, and, instead of narrowing the differences, it assumed wide dimensions so much so when prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Srinagar and addressed a public meeting at Iqbal Park, Srinagar, ruling National Conference had given a call for protest and "Hartal". The people were directed to observe the day of her visit as black day and to demonstrate against her with black flags. Accordingly, "Bandh" was observed and anger was displayed to the Prime Minister and even instance of National Conference workers exhibition of nudity before the Prime Minister was also reported, which their workers boasted of. Later on in Delhi, Indira Gandhi sarcastically remarked that cloth be immediately supplied to Kashmir, as the people

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146. "July'81 Events in Kashmir" -Published by Directorate of Information Jammu and Kashmir.

147. "Democracy-a casualty in Jammu and Kashmir "-Published by Sheikh Nazir Ahamed, General Secretary J & K National Conference.

there were roaming naked for want of clothes. It was already given currency that disturbances would overtake the city on visit of the Prime Minister and even she might not be able to deliver her public speech. I seldom go to hear the speeches but on that day I went there to see the things for myself.

Public was obstructed from reaching Iqbal Park to hear the Prime Minister. Despite drizzling and hindrances, however, people in thousands managed to reach the Park. On the road side and in the lanes close to the shops, hordes of people were watching with despise to all those going towards the venue of the public meeting. The atmosphere was charged with tension, which assumed the shape of anti India versus pro India. Indira Gandhi came and addressed the gathering. Some stones were pelted inside the Park intermittently during her speech and even before. She left after the conclusion of her speech. The audience began to leave, but it was a problem for them to leave and reach their homes safely.

After making exit through different gates of the Park, many untoward incidents of hurling abuses and manhandling took place. I came out from a gate on Magharmalbagh side and had walked hardly about thirty steps, when a gun shot was heard; I suddenly stopped. I do not know where from this bullet came and who fired this shot. I saw an officer of security force (perhaps belonging to CRPF) falling down, who was standing about five metres ahead of me. The people outside the Park were furious against the gathering. I did not deem it fit to ask the injured his particulars. One of the few constables on duty with the injured officer while giving him support said, *"hamaray officer Sahib ko goli lagi"*, (our Officer has been shot at). The local police was watching it as unconcerned spectators. Meanwhile, a jeep of Kashmir police with an officer of the state police aboard, passed from their side. One of the police personnel with the injured, wielding stick in his hands, stopped this jeep and requested them for a lift to carry his injured officer to the hospital. The local police officer, I keenly watched while walking slowly, refused bluntly and the disappointed police man became agitated. He lashed the jeep with his stick while it sped away and he cried enraged, "*Yeh sala be nahi manta hai*'" (This rascal also does not agree to give a lift), I came to know that the injured officer was later admitted to Bone Hospital, Barzulla, Srinagar. I was, however, surprised to find that the news of firing was neither published by any news paper, local or outside, nor was it covered by electronic media, nor Kashmir Government had made any mention of it in any of its press notes. Many of the persons who had attended the public meeting were manhandled and humiliated in presence of the police, presumably by National Conference workers. I saw some Muslim young men, carrying small tricolour flags in their hands were caught hold of, beaten mercilessly by anti India mob, who were flared up by National Conference leadership. Their flags were snatched and clothes torn.

As usual, National Conference leadership was against the existence of Congress in Kashmir, being the only strong pro India Party capable of casting some mark on Kashmir politics. Opposition to it so vehemently all along was only for its being a popular link between Kashmir and rest of Indiaas mentioned in preceding pages. In view of the bogey of separation of Kashmir from rest of the country, National Conference leadership thought that first requirement was to finish Congress Party so that the organisational link was eroded. It was another set back to pro India elements in Kashmir, who have mostly been overtaken by frustrations and dejections and thereby eroding pro India base in Kashmir. They have been forced to join anti India hostile camp.

Congress once held a huge rally of its workers and sympathisers in Srinagar. The workers of ruling National Conference attacked the Congress procession in Srinagar, disrupted it and thrashed brutally a number of processionists. The main slogan raised by the victims and other Congress processionists was "Azad Hindustan Zindabad" (Long live India). National Conference seemed unprepared to hear this slogan in Kashmir Valley nor liked it being raised on the soil of Kashmir. The then Congress President Mufti Mohamad Syed and its leader of the Legislature Party, Moulvi Iftikar Hussain also were not spared. They took asylum in the nearby Gurdwara at Amira Kadal, Srinagar. Undaunted by the Government suppression, Congress went on with its intensified activities for highlighting the popular grievances and exposing the corruption and anti national and anti people measures taken by the ruling National Conference. And again, the main slogan raised by the protestors was the "Azad Hindustan Zindabad" and they invariably carried the Congress flag in their hands, which was a great irritant for the Kashmir ruling party. It was for the first time in the history of Kashmir that in a pro-India movement launched by Congress, as many as nine precious lives, all Muslims,were cut killed by the police in different places of the valley, within a few days, during the regime of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, which cost his ministry but much later on July 1, 1984. The victims included a teenager Muslim boy of X class, holding the tricolour in his hands when he fell down on pumping of bullets into his chest by the Police. Such type of Police excesses committed on innocent and loyal citizens of India, have always been overlooked. Untrustworthy men are euologised and vested with power and made to appear as trusted ones, whereas the trustworthy men are compelled to become untrustworthy. This has been the result of ill conceived policy of Central Government, which is bound to ruin not only Kashmir but whole of the country. Death by the bullets of the police was the reward for raising the slogan of "Azad Hindustan Zindabad" which the slain persons got. It was Indira Gandhi, however, at the helm of affairs of India, who managed to give a stiff fight to National Conference's offensive and combative thrusts, initiated by Dr. Farooq himself. Ghulam Mohamad Shah regarded it as having disparaged communal harmony. He spoke about it:

> *"Immediately after elections, Dr. Farooq Abdullah uselessly endeavoured to impair the centuries old firm and irrevocable kinship between the State and India, which adversely affected the Hindu Muslim amity. Instead of mutually strengthening all the three regions of the state, he had sown seeds of discord, hate and hostility amongst the people living in these areas.For the sake of protecting his chair,the joined hands with anti national and secessionist forces. It had badly recoiled on the entire people of the country.*
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> *Taking cudgles with the Centre unnecessarily resulted in giving an extreme type of set back to and creating a dangerous crisis in our backward state. The dignity of the Legislative Assembly was affected. After taking an unreasonable stand on the transfer of Chief Justice of the State High Court (144) he undermined the prestige of the State Assembly as also the Government. Unnecessary interference in the matters of Punjab resulted boosting up the terrorists in the State".*[148]

An implicit campaign of vilification against India was undertaken in Kashmir and the creed of separation preached. Under the cover of identity of Kashmir, a sense of separateness was sought to be inculcated among the masses. They were being educated on these lines which was to contribute to the upsurge against the country, crystalising it, as it did, into the demand, "Azadi" (freedom). With the patronage of Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah and under the instructions of his Government, dissemination of anti India feelings were openly started in Kashmir.

A Government sponsored seminar had started in the hall of S.P. College, Srinagar, on August 13, 1983. The topic was 'Identity of Kashmir-Its challenges and dimensions".

Ordinarily such type of seminar's cannot be and should not be opposed. But the seminar, as it was, a part of the programme of vilification of India and preaching of separation from India, should not have gone unnoticed by the Centre. TheState Government had already generated heat against India and the dates of the seminar were also fixed keeping in view the approaching celebrations of independence days of India and Pakistan. The Urdu Daily "Vakil" Srinagar, published some details about the seminar and said about it : "Under the cover of Identity of Kashmir, "inauguration of secessionist movement in Kashmir has been made on Government level". Syed Shahab-ud Din, then a general secretary of Janata Party, expressed while speaking in the seminar that in view of the specific geographical position of

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148. The Chief Justice referred to here is Mr. Justice Mufti Baha-ud-Din Farooqi, who had in a letter dated August 29, 1983, addressed to the President of India, described his transfer as "unconstitutional, politically motivated and revengeful."

149. Chief Minister Mr. Ghulam Mohamad Shah's broadcast in Urdu to the people on July 3, 1984.

Kashmir, it was a distinct and separate entity which ought to be maintained. "Whatever movement is launched to preserve this position", he said and continued, "he would fully contribute to the same." In the seminar Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah said his utterances were misunderstood but the masses must be educated in regard to the identity of Kashmir. Moulvi Masoodi, who presided over the seminar, exhorted to maintain restraint and caution.

> *"Evidently Moulvi Mohamad Syed Masoodi and Dr. Farooq Abdullah had given their blessings to this seminar. At the instance of these two personages this seminar was organised in fact to mobilise public opinion, cautiously though, against the Government of India and to challenge the Accession.—*
>
> *He advised the people in mild language to have full dress debate and struggle on the issue of Accession."* [150]

A conference on History was held in the premises of Kashmir University in the month of May, 1983. It was held under the auspices of Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. While speaking in the Conference, Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah openly spoke against India and warned that in case Centre compelled him, he would become another Jinnah and the situation would get out of control in the state.[151]. On another occasion, when a seminar "*Social policy-law and protection*", was held on February 11, 1984, at Jammu University, and sponsored by the Department of Law of this University, Dr. Abdullah spoke against India and expressed that he did not want "*to see India. India was a hell*". [152]

Does it not speak about the immaturity, and irresponsibility or "non governance" of Dr. Farooq Abdullah or is it not a reflection of his inner mind and evil designs? In either case, did he deserve to be the Chief Minister of the State? National Conference (K) has referred to an estimate of Sheikh Abdullah about Dr.. Farooq in the following lines:

> *"On assuming the stewardship of the National Conference and of the Government, Dr. Farooq Abdullah put the party on wrong track. When Baba-i-Quam (Sheikh Abdullah) had installed him as the President of National Conference in his own life time, he (the Sheikh) had expressed his apprehensions that Farooq had no capacity to run the organisation or to lead the people. This fact is known to all the close colleagues of Baba-I-Quam.* [153]

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was convinced that Dr. Farooq Abdullah was undependable and was deceiving the Central Government. She talked to Rajiv

[150] The "Vakil", Srinagar, August 14, 1983.

[151] . Knowledgeable persons had communicated this information to me.

[152] Ibid.

[153] "Aina Haqiqat"-A brochure published by J & K National Conference (K) Srinagar.

Gandhi about her impressions regarding him, both as her son and General Secretary of Congress Party One day Dr. Farooq Abdullah went to Delhi and invited Rajiv Gandhi to dinner. After Rajiv Gandhi returned from the dinner, he gave a different impression about Dr. Farooq to his mother. He accordingly told her that her opinion about Farooq was totally wrong. "He is a nice man", he told his mother and expressed that Dr Farooq should not to be misunderstood, nor was he against India. But Indira Gandhi did not agree with Rajiv. She categorically told her son that he could not be trusted upon. "He will ditch me and the Centre, I am sure", She emphatically replied Rajiv.

Dr. Farooq's association with Opposition Conclave was not a bonafide gesture. It was an opportunistic move to assess if Centre could be weakened with the help of national opposition of India and non-Congress (I) governments. It was surprising that in Kashmir, he would not allow pro India opposition to grow or survive, but for his personal and ulterior motives, he sought the co-operation of national opposition to fight out Congress at the Centre and to curb the local nucleus of the national parties in the state. On the national level, he did not hesitate even to shake hands with B.J.P., but on local level, he used to oppose it as a party favouring deletion of Article 370 of Constitution of India. A poser was made to Dr. Farooq Abdullah on this developing situation by some rational thinkers in Kashmir. They regarded him as full of contradictions when, as they put it:

> "...........he tells us to accord a rousing reception to the leaders of Janata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party. When he tells us to make the opposition conclave at Srinagar on the 5th October, 1983 a success. Do we give a rousing reception to the leaders of the Janata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party whose tough opposition to our leader Baba-i-Qaum in 1977 elections had caused such a great strain that he suffered his first heart attack.
>
> Are we really interested in supporting the cause of Andhra, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in their demand for greater autonomy from the Centre when the constitutional status of Kashmir is already determined by Article 370 of the Constitution?"[154]

His behaviour constituted escapism so far as the units of national opposition in Kashmir were concerned and it was his policy of separatism so far as the Centre was concerned.

Two Central Ministers of the Congress Party, Arun Nehru and Arif Khan visited Kashmir to study the situation for themselves on the spot. Indira Gandhi's assessment that Dr. Farooq would ditch her and the Centre had come out true. Poshker Nath Koul Vakil suggested them to cut Farooq to his size through his own relation. He told them to support Ghulam Mohamad Shah to become the Chief

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154. "Kashmir at cross roads", a pamphlet by Kashmir Forum for rational thinkers.

Minister. They emphatically replied him "*No, No, that cannot be*". They clarified that "*Madam (Indira Gandhi) would not at all agree to that proposal*". He however, insisted them to have a talk with the Prime Minister over the proposal.

One day Poshker Nath Koul Vakil came to the Bar and talked to me in confidence about the above proposal. He had received a telephonic message from New Delhi that his proposal got through and wanted him to proceed ahead and negotiate about the modalities with Ghulam Mohamad Shah. He was not Ain good terms with him, as such, he desired me to speak to him about the matter in confidence. I took Ghulam Mohamad Shah aside after he came to the Court and asked him whether he wanted to become the Chief Minister of the State. He replied me in affirmative. "But how could I be" he asked. I began to explain him, "you can become Chief Minister with the support of Congress". The utterance of Congress support from my mouth, sounded him something paradoxical, as I had been through out my life opposed to Congress. "No, No. I never want to become the Chief Minister with Congress support", he cut short the matter, for he did not realise the authenticity behind the suggestion, nor he had any reason to believe it as it emanated from my mouth. He was aware that without Congress support he could not dream to become the Chief Minister. He was himself an M.L.C and not even an M.L.A. But he had to make himself sure that support would really be forthcoming from the Centre.

I did not go further in the matter and conveyed it to Poshkar Nath when he again came to the Court to enquire from me about the developments in the matter as New Delhi had again enquired about the matter from him. I had explained him my difficulty to proceed further in the matter. He then met Ghulam Nabi Kochak, a confidanante of Shah, in this regard but the proposal didnot make any headway and he also did not like to go ahead in the matter himself. He, therefore, informed New Delhi accordingly and wanted them to tap any other source to initiate negotiations with Ghulam Mohamad Shah. Finally Dr. Farooq Abdullah was ousted on July 2, 1984 and Shah was sworn in as Chief Minister with the support of Congress.

It was an interesting instance in the world of Parliamentary democracy that as many members of the legislature as Shah group could enlist, became all Ministers. I and many other political activists came to know about the dismissal of Dr. Farooq's Government in the train while travelling to Bangalore. All wanted to verify the authenticity of this news. It was confirmed when the train shortly reached Secunderabad and the news had hit the headlines of the newspapers available at the Railway bookstall there.

Dr. Farooq invited Mir Qasim at his residence for consultations on the same day. The latter was very much concerned over it and strongly criticised the Governor and the Central Government for this action. "*They have snatched our government today, they may snatch our religion tomorrow*", remarked Mir Qasim to Dr. Farooq Abdullah in his angry mood. It was always unfortunate for Kashmir that its leaders never intended to segregate politics from religion and that they never looked at political action and development from political angle, but through communal and religious glasses. The question of snatching their religion was not there the Chief Ministers in Kashmir have always been Muslims and Dr. Farooq was succeeded by his own brother in law, Ghulam Mohamad Shah, a devout Sunni Muslim. Janata Party executive, however, passed a resolution on July 5, 1984, at Bangalore, condemning the action of dismissal of Dr.. Farooq's Government as "*unconstitutional*". The resolution said, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her "*renewed desire for absolute power*" had decided to throw to the winds all constitutional norms thereby destablishing sensitive border states.

The Central leaders of Janata Party least knew that the process of destabilisation openly started and was helped by Dr. Farooq himself. They were never prepared to listen to any fair assessment against him. In their ignorance or due to political short sightedness they wanted Dr. Farooq to come back to power to complete his unfinished task of destabilizing the State, the result of which the nation faces today in Kashmir.He was treated as a security risk by his own brother, Tariq Abdullah and others and the government of India acted when Dr. Farooq Abdullah was really regarded as security risk for Kashmir. I was convinced that Central leadership of Janata Party, (as now is the case with Janata Dal) was pursuing a disastrous policy about Kashmir. As such, I had risen to open revolt against it along with all Party colleagues of Kashmir. As a result of this, I was suspended alongwith the Party's Srinagar unit.

> *"The Srinagar unit and its Secretary, Mr. P.L. Kaul ,* [155]*had been suspended 'for the stand taken against the national executive resolution on Jammu and Kashmir adopted at its meeting in Bangalore'.*[156]
> *The resolution expressed solidarity with the former Chief Minister,. Dr. Farooq Abdullah and assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir of the Party's unstinted support in their struggle against Mrs. Gandhi's diabolical moves to disrupt and derail democracy in their State".* [157]

The leaders outside the State of Jammu and Kashmir are perhaps under the impression that Kashmir is also like U.P., Bihar, Bengal, Andhra, Karnataka and

[155] *The author was the Senior General Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir unit and not of Srinagar unit Opposition to the national resolution of the Party, however, came from Kashmir only and not from Jammu . For endorsing the author's stand and revolting against the Central leadership of the Party later, the other local party colleagues including Dr. (Mrs.) Jagat Mohini, Mr. Ghulam Rasool Bhat,Mr. Peerzada Shamasu-ud-Din, Mr. Keval Krishan Gupta, Mr. Sahibzada Mian Mohamad Shafi, Mr. Krishan Lal Wazir, Mr. Noor Mohamad Mir and Mr. Basheer Mohd. Sadiq were also suspended.*

[156] *Times of India, July 6, 1984.*

[157] *Times of India, August 31, 1984.*

any other province of India. They, as such, adopt the same moves and methods about Kashmir, which they use for any other province of India. Their concept of "disruption and derailment of democracy" may go against national interests and result in renunciation of sovereignty of India in Kashmir. What has the National Front Government achieved in Kashmir for over one year past now? It has ruined Kashmir and annihilated pro-India elements there, both Hindus and Muslims. Unless the situation is fully understood and then faced boldly and honestly, no attempts at dialogues or other solutions would be fruitful. It was what I always wanted to be done about Kashmir. I and my colleagues were visualising the coming disaster which is fraught with dangerous consequences even for the entire country and which these leaders are not realising yet, as they are only concerned with power and party politics.

It may be added here that anti India activities, Muslim fundamentalism and forces of destabilisation and secession were gaining ground in Kashmir even during the stewardship of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah. It, however, assumed wide proportions and became more pronounced, distinct and crystallised on November 3, 1982, when People's League, Mahaz-I-Azadi and Jama-at-i-Tulba jointly met at sopore and decided to enlarge the sphere of their anti India activities. They renewed their determination to secure secession of Kashmir at any cost and did not accept constitution of India in any form and manner:

> *"Secessionist organisations are on a dangerous course in the Kashmir Valley. Some of these including Jamait-i-Tulba are working hard to set up their units in schools to "catch them young".*
>
> *The Jamat-i-Islami leaders too work in the same way. Day in and day out, they alert the Muslims to save their culture which, according to them, is in danger in Kashmir."* [158]

After the "Accord" was reached and Sheikh Abdullah inducted to power, Government of India had thought that Accession issue was settled once for all. But anti accession activities were unabated and carried on openly by different secessionist organisations. They raised off and on, the demand for settling the question of accession in the light of resolutions passed by UNO. Anti India activities, therefore, received a fillip with the Sheikh dynasty coming to power.

The towering man of the nation in Kashmir and his successors in office neither did check nor curb such activities, by design or otherwise. A conference of the Muslims called and convened for the purpose, passed a resolution on the future status of Kashmir on October 20, 1982.

> *"On October 20 "Muslim Conference", called by Mr. Mohamad Altaf Khan alias Azim Inqilabi, a teacher in a government school, passed a resolution. The Jamait was very much a party to the resolution demand-*

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[158] *Indian Express, New Delhi Dec* [illegible] *1982.*

> *ing that the Kashmir issue should be settled according to the Untied Nations resolution............*
>
> *............The other demands projected, of course, were seemingly cultural but aimed at something else. The Conference demanded setting up an Islamic University, ban on co-education in the State, teaching of Arabic from the Primary to the post graduate level and ban on cinemas and advertisements".* [159]

The movement launched by anti India organizations was generally two pronged.It aimed at seeking separation from India on the one hand and establishing "Nizam-e-Mustaffa" in Kashmir, on the other Jamait-i-Islami and its students wing Jamait-i-Tulba were equally keen to havesuch a government that would establish the society built on Islamic tenets. A few secessionist parties, however, were not so keen about "Nizame-Mustaffa" as they were for "Azadi". In any case, their movement was communal and more prompted by Islamic fundamentalism than by purely political considerations. As such,the above "cultural demands" laying the basis for "Nizame Mustaffa", were highlighted by the secessionist groups and parties which later turned more or less, into militant organisations, the main goal being the common to these groups and parties which agreed to form a "United Liberation Front" to fight against India and Indian elements more vigorously and effectively.

> *"Some of these anti-national parties have evolved a consensus to form a "United Liberation Front" in the State. All of them have the same goal but some, like the Jamait-i-Tulba which widened its base in the Valley considerably during the last two years, do not want to give up their identity".* [160]

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[159] *The Indian Express, December 9, 1982.*

[160] *Ibid*

CHAPTER XVI

Anti national outbursts

The Kashmir leadership always exploited religion for the sake of their political ends and invariably blackmailed the Centre in the name of India. When these leaders were in power, they posed to be fervent Indians. When they are out of power, they appear to be anything but Indian. In that event, no political creed or philosophy or rationalism is sacrosanct to them, which otherwise, they so much cherish and boast of. With the passage of time, a regular campaign against India came to surface and concerted activities for subversion, deaccession, destablilisation and for escalation of Muslim fundamentalism were, more often than not, discernable throughout the Valley.

Though Sheikh Abdullah did not campaign for National Conference in 1977 Assembly election, yet he initially gave out his mind and threatened to reopen the Accession issue, if Article 370 of the Constitution of India was abrogated which confered special status on Kashmir. This, however, was no issue at all, much less in the election. National Conference of its own raised this issue, as if government of India was keen to delete Article 370 and opposed India under this pretext. Indian Express editorially commented on it under caption "*Playing with fire*". It said:

> *"Whatever the pressure may be up against, Sheikh Abdullah's opening salve in Kashmir's electoral battle is unworthy of his stature as an elder statesman. In threatening Accession if Kashmir's special status is eroded or ended, the Sheikh is not only disowning his own catagorical pronouncements made after his second induction into power two years ago, but seeking to exhume and resuscitate a bogey that a quarter century of history has buried for good........*
>
> *We may assume that all Kashmiris have strong feelings in this matter. There is, therefore, no call for Sheikh Abdullah to strike the heroic pose of a lone defender against an imaginary onslaught on the rights of Kashmiris......... But to identify and equate Kashmir and its distinct culture and personality with himself and his party is a dangerous form of megalomania. The State units of the Congress Party and the Janata Party are as much Kashmiri as the National Conference. Yet what Sheikh Abdullah says amounts to a declaration that unless National Conference wins the election, he will raise the banner of secession. This is playing with fire"* [161]

In early July 1980, a Muslim comrade of mine (name purposely not mentioned) came to me and informed that a secessionist group had decided to cause a clash between civilians and military in Srinagar. He wanted me to pass on the information to the Central Government immediately as also to the opposition leaders in the country. The government was to be informed for remaining vigilant about it and the opposition leaders for getting an idea as to how the things were being shaped in Kashmir which no authority or leadership visualised and perceived or bothered about. I, however, refused its onward communication on two counts: firstly, I had no proof to substantiate this wild but serious allegation, though for such things there could be no proof either; secondly, the long experience had shown that they had neither the will nor the capacity to go deep into the affairs of Kashmir, whether it was the Government or the Opposition. They were simply interested in retaining or assuming power. I also explained to him that we were always misunderstood for exposing the stark realities about Kashmir and the stand taken for the sake of the country . Our politics was based on sincerity and honesty without strings from anywhere. But nobody paid heed to our reports or views. He insisted me to send a despatch on his responsiblity. "*I will think it over*" was my final reply to my trusted colleague. He, thereafter, sent me two reminders through another comrade about sending this despatch, which I never chose to send as I had lost faith in the competence of the Central Government and the staggering opposition. Whatever the apparent cause, a clash really occured later on between civilians and army. This incident happended on July 26, 1980 at Civil Lines, Srinagar which became a serious matter . The Defence Ministry gave the facts of the incident as under:

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[161] The Indian Express, New Delhi, May 25, 1977.

> *"The trouble started when a three tonne lorry driven by an army man met a minor accident with a tempo in the crowded Badshah Chowk. The driver was beaten up by an angry mob and he had to take rufuge in a nearby police station. After sometime, two army water-carrier vehicles passed by the scene of the accident. They were forcibly stopped by the mob. The drivers were pulled out of their vehicles, beaten up and the vehicles were set on fire.*
>
> *On getting this information, a party of six jawans under a young officer rushed to the scene to rescue the injured jawans and retrieve the damaged vehicles. They were also attacked by the mob. The young officer sustained multiple fractures in his arm. Later, a stronger party under a senior officer was sent to rescue the army personnel whose lives were in danger on account of the mob fury. While rescuing the injured soldiers, there was a clash betwee them and the mob, in which both sides sustained injuries"*. [162]

As a result of this occurance, many of the non-Muslim shops in the vicinity including those of Ranson India, Shakti Sweets, Krossway Bar, Kailash Cafeteria,

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[162] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, August, 1, 1980.*

Vishinath Press and Naya Kashmir Hotel were damaged and looted. Non-Muslims in Kashmir have always been regarded as agents of India. Apparently, it was a sudden civilian and military clash, having occured ostensibly due to an accident but in reality it was something more, which was sought to be achieved by its anti India sponsors. The events indicated that the clash was pre-planned, excuse for which was sought and situation created to warn India to wind up her bag and baggage in Kashmir. Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah mentioned that Lt. General Malhotra had expressed regret over the incident and assured him that the guilty would be punished. Meetings of army and civilian officers were held which were attended by also Governor, L. K. Jha.

The Chief Minister said that "*a ban on the entry of army vehicles and army personnel into the city had been imposed for three days*". [163]

Such accidents of vehicles took place everywhere, Sheikh Abdullah admitted but instituted a joint enquiry of army and civilian officers to report on the accident. The inquiry was meaningless as no civilian would come forward to speak the truth. One sided, incorrect and exaggerated accounts were expected to be given to the inquiry committee, which had to go against army. Had the Commander like Lt. General Bikram Singh been there in command of Kashmir, the things would certainly have been different and he would not have demoralised the faultless army as Lt. General Malhotra did. Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah also gave in substance the same story of accident but hinted at excesses perpetrated on the civilians. As a result of this clash, some taxis and buses were damaged and many members of the public as well as some police personnel were badly injured. Ten army personnel also were seriously injured. One army jawan sustained "*bullet injury*" in the stomach and others suffered "*multiple injuries*". The Muslim demonstration continued for two days.

> *"A rumour was also set afloat that the Jama Masjid in the city had been burnt. And though the authorities were quick to scotch these rumours, it showed that anit-national elements interested in a recrudescence of trouble in Kashmir valley, are still active. . . . .*
>
> *The police had to resort to heavy teargassing and at a couple of places it opened fire to disperse the violent crowds with which it was battling. Among the six people killed in two days of violence was a Pakistani national who had come here on a regular visa in connection with the marriage of a relative of his . . . . Anti India elements, however, availed of the opportunity and tried to give the civilian and army clash a communal colour. Anti-India slogans were also raised at a number of places and leader of the right-wing Jamait-e-Islami was reported to have compared the Army men's action in Srinagar to the Soviet intervention*

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[163] *The Hindustan Times, July 28, 1980.*

in Afghanistan".[164]

The anti India elements were gaining mileage in Kashmir with connivance of the State Government. Clash with army seemed to be a test case which encouraged them further and they began to work openly against India. These activities were side by side given pro-Islamic touch in order to consolidate Muslims in the name of Islam and to fight India in Kashmir.

Some time after Muslim and army clash, liquor shops in Anantnag, all belonging to Hindus, were raided, plundered and damaged. The existence of Hindus was endangered as much as the Hindu employees posted there could not attend their offices and had to proceed on casual mass leave. The Sheikh's successor Dr. Farooq Abdullah continued the policy of suppressing pro-India elements.

Chief Minister Dr.Farooq Abdullah openly came out against the Centre and tacitly challenged Kashmir's Accession to India. It was generally so when the elections to the legislature were in the offing. By touching the sensitive chord of the Muslim voters, the leaders would go to any extent in exploiting them and gaining their sympathies by adopting anti-India attitude. They hardly made any distinction between the Central Government and India as a country. Once they learnt to differentiate between the two, much trouble would have been remedied and suspicions allayed, provided they were sincere in realising it and honest in practising it. It would have cured them of the malady of separatism and helped throwing them into the national mainstream. Dr.Abdullah in his speech made in early January 1983, warned the Central Government in the words reported below:

> *"Dangerous consequences can flow if the Central Government does not ensure adequate aid to the State. What was the provocation for him to adopt an aggressive posture viz- a-viz the Centre suddenly . . . . One wonders if Mr Farooq Abdullah believes that the accession of Jammu & Kashmir is linked with just a few hundred tonnes of rice and supply of electricity from the northern grid.He is trying to play on the sentiments of the common people in Kashmir particularly when the State Assembly elections are coming closer, is nothing new. This is normally the occassion when Accession is challenged, Rawalpindi road is sought to be opened. Muslim majority character of the State and Article 370, which gives the State a special status in the Indian Union, are sought to be defended by the ruling party leaders".*[165]

International cricket match between India and West Indies was played in Srinagar on October 13, 1983. It appeared that the bulk of spectators in the cricket stadium were anti India who dominated the scene. They did not allow the home team to play the match. It was an open anti India demonstration. The managers, security men and other government officials seemed to be in a helpless condition. Despite thorough check and scrutiny at the entrance, Pakistani flags, life size photographs of Imran Khan and other things were smuggled into the stadium. By raising inside the stadium slogans freely like "Pakistan Zindabad"," Imran Khan Zindabad", "Hindustan Murdabad", "Crush India", "West Indies Zindabad", "Kapil Dev Murdabad", "Islam Zindabad", "Indian dogs go back", the entire nation was put to ridicule. Pakistani flag was also waved and the anti India youth, both boys and girls had a field day to demonstrate against India. It all happened in presence of Chief Minister Dr.Farooq Abdullah and other Ministers who did not do anything about this serious matter. The overawed pro-India youths found themselves in suffocating and hostile environment and could not even cheer their national players whenever they gave a good account of their play and deserved applause. But they were shamefully shouted upon with slang language by the anti-national spectators and chappals, stones and empty bottles were thrown upon them whenever they showed good performance. As against this, they cheered and bucked up the West Indies players when they scored a run or so and some spectators would rush to the pitch to hug and kiss them. This was an unpardonable act which hurt the national pride. After this episode also the eyes of the nation were not opened and the Central Government did not wake up from the long slumber, nor formulated an effective policy in order to put an end to increasing anti national activities. What more indication was needed to see that Kashmir was heading towards an acute crisis?

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[164] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, August 1, 1980.*

[165] *The Indian Express, January 14, 1983*

It had become a tough job for the police a few last years to maintain law and order on August 15, the day of India's independence. It had equally become a problem for the innocent people to celebrate the independence day in that atmosphere of horror and suffocation as the anti Indians and secessionists had declared and used to observe India's Independence Day as "*Black Day*". The anti Indian groups and parties would openly make demonstration on this day, affecting the normal life in Kashmir. In Hindu areas like Ganpatyar and Habbakadal, some Hindu shops and houses were looted and set on fire, though prohibitory orders were in force. What happened, for instance, on Independence Day, August 15, in 1984, is very briefly given as under:

> *"The trouble began around 10.30 A.M. when groups of people waving Pakistani flags and shouting anti national slogans gathered in Habbakadal, Ganpatyar, Khanyar, Nawahatta, Bhorikadal, Rajouri Kadal and Gojwara areas of down town and attempted to march in a procession towards the sports stadium where the ceremonial Independence Day parade was being held.........*
>
> *The mob, while retreating, attempted to set some shops on fire in the Ganpatyar area and looted some houses. The residents put out the fire before fire tenders could reach the spot ....*

> *Later, Mr. Ali Mohamed Naik, the State Education and Reveue Minister, told newsmen that while retreating, the mob had burnt a scooter and thrown about a dozen bicycles looted from houses of the minority community in the Ganpatyar area into the Jehlum.*
>
> *He said reports of stonning of a religious place and attempted molestation of two girls had also been received from the area."*[166]

That was not all. The Independence Day of Pakistan, August 14, was openly celebrated in many places of Kashmir, In the year 1985, it was celebrated comparatively on a large scale. In Srinagar, the students and youth raised pro Pakistan slogans and unfurled Pakistani flags. The students left their colleges early in the morning and took out processions in different groups in the interior city, hoisting Pakistani flags and raising the slogan "Pakistan Zindabad". They hailed that country while police chased them throughout the day. River bank was illuminated in the evening by them.

> *"At Nawabazaar, these elements hoisted the green flags like buntings on elecric poles and transmission lines. The Pak flags were hoisted at Iqbal Institute of the Kashmir University, and students of Gandhi Memorial college also took out a procession to mark the day ....Posters appeared in Baramulla and Srinagar calling for observance of August 15, as "black day" The call was given by so called "Al Jahad" and "Kashmir Liberation Army".* [167]

In Baramulla also, processions were taken out, pro Pakistan slogans raised and the flag of Pakistan hoisted. Crackers were blasted and Pakistan was hailed. In the evening river banks were illuminated. In Sopore also, besides raising pro Pakistan slogans, the flag of that country was hoisted which the police removed later. Slogans hailing Pakistan were raised in Anantnag as well. The same position more or less recrudescenced on these occassions in the ensuing years. While addressing the public at National Conference headquarters Srinagar on August 9, 1984 Dr.Farooq Abdullah started an unwarranted tirade against the Indian army and challenged them that they could not be able to crush and enslave Kashmiris. The irresponsible former Chief Minister while referring to Indian army, instigated the people against India and said:

> *"Neither can they (Indian Army) subdue people of Kashmir, nor can they enslave them . . . . Kashmiri people shall have to withstand the bullets to prove that they are a living nation. They should be prepared to undergo any sacrifice to vindicate their honour and respect ....Kashmir is not anybody's estate. Kashmiris alone have a right to rule over it".* [168]

166. The Times of India, August 16, 1984.

167. The Martand, Srinagar August 15, 1985.

168. The Srinagar Times, August [illegible], 1984

Can this contemptuous attitude smacking of treason be tolerated by any patriot of India or by any sovereign country, except India? It may be mentioned that Indian army is a well disciplined army. This army has, alongwith other para military forces, rendered meritorious services to the people of Kashmir. They raised some structures in the countryside of the Valley of Kashmir for public use and handed over the same to the public for running the schools for education of local children. They constructed a few mosques also, gave those to local muslims for performing namaaz and prayers. They also provided at various places and at various occasions medical aid and other facilities to the civilian population of Kashmir. Their role has been magnificent and their reputation enviable. They befriended the people of Kashmir wholeheartedly, helped and rescued them whenever any calamity descended upon them. If they had not treated Dr. Farooq and other Kashmiris as a part of the Indian nation, which they undoubtedly are, these forces would have made lives of the inhabitants of Kashmir miserable by harassing and annoying the people in various ways as a victorious army does many a time. But the Indian army and paramilitary forces have maintained high standards of behaviour and discipline as well as courteous and congenial disposition and relation.

Dr.Farooq Abdullah did not hesitate even to challenge the Accession of Kashmir to India and threatened to undo the accession. In a speech made in Srinagar on April 6, 1985, he spoke against India which was resented by some Ministers:

> *"The Minister for Information, Mr.Rafiq Hussain Khan today strongly condemned Dr.Abdullah's speech at Srinagar yesterday and said that it smacked of secession.*
>
> *Sharply reacting to Dr.Farooq's reported threat to "snap ties with India" and creating "Punjab like situation in the State", the Minister said that Dr. Abdullah was coming in his true colours".* [169]

At the Press Club at Chandigarh G.M.Shah , then Chief Minster said that *"an FIR had been registered against his predecessor on account of his statement that Kashmir would snap ties with India".* [170]

What has been peculiar to Kashmir may not be so about other provinces in the country or even about Pakistan and other muslim countries. Tension was created and India maligned whenever any unislamic act or provocative occurrence had taken place anywhere in the world, regardless of the time elapsed. Trouble would start whether it was the question of desecration of "mosque Alkasa" by Israil, or the long back publication of the book of "Religious Leaders" or of "Folk tales of Afghanistan", or of filing of Writ Petition in the Calcutta High Court seeking ban on the holy Quran, and demonstrations were held by Muslims in Kashmir, generating tension and even causing breach of peace. The CPI office in Srinagar was also

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169. *The Kashmir Times, Jammu, April 6,1985.*

170. *The Indian Express April 12, 1985*

not spared, though it had nothing to do with the filing of that writ petition which was not liked by anybody. Muslims had closed their shops in Jammu also in this regard even when the Writ Petition was dismissed.

Democracy also has its limits and doesnot mean to bestow unbridled freedom and liberty to the people, particularly those having indulged in unlawful activities for separation. Kashmiri Muslims enjoyed democracy and liberty which they might not have enjoyed even in Pakistan. This was a real democracy or weakness of Government of India.

It is shameful to put in black and white here that even the casual accidents were sought to be used, and in fact were exploited as occassions to accuse India and speak against India, for no fault of us. On April 30 , 1985, for instance, a child Parvez Ahamed was killed in an accident in Srinagar by metador, driven by a member of the same community. The accident was unfortunate but the Indians were abused for no fault of theirs and for an accident unconnected with them. Pretexts were sought to campaign against India. Some trouble shooters shouted slogans like "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Indian dogs go back". The shopkeepers were forced by a violent mob to down their shutters in the area. In the afternoon, the situation again deteriorated,

> *"............a large number of people reportedly activisits of National Conference (F) and Awami Action Committee collected at Babademb on Nallah Mar road and without any provocation started shouting objectionable slogans besides resorting to stone pelting on the passing vehicles......"*[171]

According to informed sources, the afternoon trouble was part of the planned strategy to disturb peace in the city on any pretext made by some political Parties. Can such a thing happen any where in the world and would the sovereign power of any country tolerate it helplessly? If such things go undeterred and unpunished, it encourages to take extreme steps which defy the peace and tranquility.

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171. *The Kashmir Times, May, 1, 1985.*

CHAPTER XVII

Exploitation and outrage of secularism

Chief Minister of the State, Ghulam Mohamad Shah did not like the State Congress President, Mufti Mohamad Syed to fight the byelection to the State Assembly from Ranbirsinghpura an overwhelming Hindu constituency in Jammu. Shah apprehended his success from Jammu after constant failures from Muslim Assembly constituencies in Kashmir. His success was feared to cause the debacle of Shah Ministry. Mufti fought this election and succeeded in February 1985. The main aim of Mufti Syed was now to overthrow the Shah Ministry and to assume power himself as Chief Minister of the State. He never wanted to lose this opportunity and started political intrigues.

Ghulam Mohamed Shah visualised the shadow of coming trouble. His camp felt concerned about saving the ministry and even initiated a dialogue for merger with Dr Farooq's National Conference. It was to fight back Congress and resume the place in the parent organisation, to indulge in communal and anti national activities.

> *"A discernable change in the relationship between mother and daughter had come about following efforts of mediation by some cabinet colleagues of Mr Shah in the victory of the PCC (I) President Mufti Mohamed Syed in the R.S. Pura by election to the State Assembly early this year. Dr Farooq Abdullah's hardened attitude towards an approachment with his estranged brother-in-law also contributed to frustrating the efforts of the mediators."* [172]

Begum Akbar Jan had termed her son-in-law Ghulam Mohamad Shah as "a traitor to the country, the people and the party"[173]. Shah, therefore, began to beat the old track which his father-in-law used to tread and started to make irresponsible utterances and sought to revive the issues buried in the past. The Times of India, referring to him, carried the following news item:

> *"Another remark made by Mr.Shah about the alleged role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the arrest of the late Sheikh Abdullah had also evoked a sharp response from the Congress. Mr. Shah is reported to have stated that the then leaders of the country were dishonest about the special status of the state. This was resisted by the Sheikh and it led to his eventual arrest in August 1953, according to Mr. Shah.*
>
> *Mr Ansari has accused Mr.Shah of adopting the same tactics as the*

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[172] *The Indian Express ,August 3, 1985.*

[173] *The Indian Express ,January 20, 1985*

> *Sheikh after the signing of Kashmir accord in 1975. He has asked the Chief Minister to come out openly and disown his alliance with the Congress, if he had the courage to do so, otherwise he must publically apologize.*
>
> *The Congress leader has stated that his party extended support to Mr.Shah on his categorical assurance that he would adopt and implement the party's programme and plan. He criticised Mr.Shah for casting aspersions on the party and its leaders of the stature of the late Jawaharlal Nehru."* [174]

The State Congress President had himself become a source of nuisance to the Congress Government at the Centre. He was persuading central leaders to dislodge Ghulam Mohamed Shah and induct the Congress ministry with himself as Chief Minister of the State, or to compel Shah for a coalition Government with Congress and Shah to be accommodated somewhere outside the state. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi gave a hint to Shah when Rajiv suggested him to get alongwith Congress men.

> *"Shri Rajiv Gandhi advised me to try to accommodate Mufti Mohamed Syed Sahib and others. I told him what could I do. The son-in-law of one has misappropriated lakhs of rupees and the other has illegally grabbed the land of Dharmarth and set up an agency for Maruti Cars there. In order to get possession of this land, we were misled to believe that the land was government land whereas it belonged to Dharmarth. On this Rajiv Gandhi expressed that those people had lust for power. Then he again told me to have some compromise with them".* [175]

Mufti Syed on his earlier election failures and low profile in public field, had planned to make a dent in Muslim masses and fight out Sheikh Abdullah and his relations by inculcating negative policies and communal extremism amongst Muslims of the Valley. With this communal counter blast he wanted to get a foothold among the Muslim masses and weaken his political adversaries. Indira Gandhi had, however, always given him full support and help. She lifted him from ground to the sky and from straw to strength. She made Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah rub his shoulders with Mufti Syed, whom he had never recognised and acknowledged. During Presidentship of State Congress, Mufti's statements were often prepared by the officers connected with the publicity department and the electronic media. He was given out of way publicity on the electronic media as directed by the Central government. Taking liberties, therefore, Mufti would simply inform electronic media men that he was going to such and such place to address a public meeting and news from the media would flash with his speech supposed to have been delivered by him there.

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[174] *The Times of India, December 7, 1985.*

[175] *"Jammu Kashmir may Governor Raj Kiyon-" post dismissal speech by Ghulam Mohamed Shah, delivered in Srinagar on March 28, 1986., and published by his Party National Conference (K)*

A retired officer of Radio Station, Srinagar (who does not want to be named) told me one day that he had to face an embarrassing position once on Mufti's account. Quoting an instance, he disclosed that the Government mediamen were informed about Mufti's tour of the countryside in Kashmir for addressing a public meeting. The news bulletin of the electronic media, as usual, carried his news and the speech he supposedly made there. Some quarters lodged a protest with them for transmitting unfounded and false news. Mufti Syed had not at all gone there, not to speak of having made any speech. Because of Congress Government's support to him, the mediamen were saved. The Centre's help had made him very mobile. Many a time, he took his breakfast in Srinagar, lunch in Delhi and dinner again in Srinagar.

Being the State Congress President, he wielded much influence which he used for creating opposition to Sheikh Abdullah and his dynasty. Mufti extended his patronage to communal elements and wanted them to organise and consolidate their ranks. After he was taken in the Central Cabinet as Tourism Minister, he continued to do his job in Kashmir, helping create a Muslim communal force, which was bound to boomerang and go against India with all its ramifications.

It is said that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was not pleased with Mufti 's role who apprehended his ouster from the Ministry, and made an issue of Meerut disturbances and Muslim killings in order to resign. He went to the State Assembly exclusively on Hindu vote from Jammu, got political survival and later became Central Minister due to the grace of Congress but resigned to protest on a Muslim issue and not on mishandling of Kashmir.

In the Assembly election of 1977, Congress was completely routed in the Valley of Kashmir. Janata Party also was trounced in the Valley, though it had the guidance and leadership of no less a personality than Maulana Mohamad Syed Masoodi and other stalwarts. Both Janata Party and Congress, however, survived effectively in the two other regions of the State, Jammu and Ladakh.

It was a period of Janata rule in the Centre. But leader of Janata Legislature Party was thrust from Kashmir even though about a dozen of members were elected from Jammu region and only two had returned from the entire Kashmir Valley. It was again a differential treatment meted out to Jammu and Ladakh in the sphere of politics, whether it was the leadership of Maulana Masoodi or Mufti Syed, the basic approach, practice and the process were one and the same. This sense of domination of Kashmiri Muslim over the Kashmiri Hindu and the regions of Jammu and Ladakh, originated from this communal tendency. It is genesis of Kashmir imbroglio which has been fully exploited by the Kashmiri leaders even to the detriment of national interests.

In 1983 Assembly elections, Congress won two seats in the Valley of

Kashmir, and 38 went to National Conference. Congress, however, came out in flying colours in Jammu region winning as many as 23 seats out of 32 while 6 were bagged by National Conference and 3 by Bharatya Janata Party. Janata Party was totally wiped out. In Ladakh region, out of two seats, one each had gone to Congress and National Conference. Even then a Kashmiri Muslim was thrust leader of the Congress Legislature Party and a Jammu Muslim legislator was not appointed if a Muslim alone was essentially to be chosen for the post.

The remnant Janata Party in Kashmir Valley, was a group of political activists robust in conviction and patriotism, undetered and steadfast in pursuit of their political idealism, divorced completely from political opportunism. They were deprived of the legacy and assets of Janata Party headed by Mulana Mohammed Syed Masoodi. They were let down by the Central Party and deserted by other stalwarts. They had no office, no furniture and as usual no money.

During the period of above stalwarts, lakhs of rupees were sent in by the Central party to their unit in Kashmir. Since I had become Senior General Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir unit, we had to depend as usual, on our lean pocket. All others left the party one by one, some in search of fresh political opportunism, others went back to their respective parties they had come from and still others went into political hibernation.

I had prepared a note on Kashmir as also on the organisational set up and had the same handed over to Asoka Mehta Committee when it visited Srinagar in May, 1977 in connection with forming the State Committee of Janata Party. My apprehension contained in the note came out to be true. This note inter alia, reads:

> *"The opportunist elements and vested interests are striking hard to mark debut in the Janata Party here. If they are allowed to make any head way in the party, they will cling to it only up to the time the party is in power and it suits their interest and purpose. They can again indulge in political somersaults and change loyalties thereafter.*
>
> *Unmindful of opportunism, the existing rank and file of the constituent units of the Janata Party have braved the onslaught yesterday and are prepared to shoulder the responsibility today and determined to face any eventuality tomorrow.They are and they will be, unlike opportunist elements, what they have been, undeterred and unshaken in their loyalty to the party.*
>
> *The mainstay for the Janata Party, therefore, is the existing and the dependable rank and file, which under the changed situation can enlarge and entrench the mass base of the party, otherwise a hotch potch type of state committee of the Janata Party may ultimately prove damaging. Grass roots of the party are, as such, to be boosted up and members of the state committee and office bearers thereof need to be taken from*

among them." [176]

Janata Party, however, announced later a committee with Maulana Mohamad Syed Masoodi as its Convener, ignoring one and all from the Valley who were for long working in the national opposition of the country as mentioned earlier. A damaging political tactic was adopted and a bad precedent set. The pro-India opposition men were unceremoniously disowned and the same policy of derecognition was adopted against them. It left a bad impression in the public mind that main stream opposition would never gain any credibility in Kashmir. Janata Party, as such, affected the political thinking in Kashmir, which in turn affected the national interests. It was neither in line with principle based politics nor conducive for its healthy growth in Kashmir. It rather boosted the politics of opportunism and laid bare the shallowness of Indian politics in Kashmir as well as non utility of working in national opposition. All the Central leaders have been suffering from the vice of imperceptibility of Kashmir situation, trends and politics. As such, their moves have always been miscalculated and wrong.

I wanted to put the record straight and wrote a letter to Janata Party President Chandra Shekhar. I made certain prophesies in the letter about the organisation which came out true one by one subsequently. This letter of 25th May 1977 inter alia reads:

> *".........All the constituent units of Janata Party in Jammu, were given representation on the State Adhoc Committee, but no constituent unit in Kashmir Valley was given any representation on this committee....appears that they have taken a vow to annihilate and crush them politically. So far as Kashmir Valley is concerned, most of the members appointed on the Adhoc Committee are great political opportunists, well versed in the art of political somersaults and are undependable, having no following and with blemished and doubtful past. Such a constitution of the Adhoc Committee has not only caused demoralisation and frustration in the trusted and steadfast rank and file....but has also tarnished the image of the Janata Party in the eyes of the people who are sure to bring the known opportunists and double faced men on the Adhoc Committee to the exclusion of constituent units...instead of giving any advantage to the Janata Party thereby, it has only added to its liability in Kashmir Valley. The picture of the Janata Party thus emerged has abated the once spreading "Janata wave" here......*
>
> *Let it be known to you that people have abhorred and deserted this Adhoc Committee as far as Kashmir Valley representation is concerned and the Janata Party will cut a sorry figure in Kashmir Valley in the*

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176. A note on Kashmir affairs and organisational set up furnished by the author to Ashoka Mehta Committee in Srinagar in May, 1977.

> *forthcoming Assembly election. Our leaders have made Mr. Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference stronger day by day. The Sheikh has become again a force to reckon with in the Valley. The opportunists who have presently surrounded and assembled under the banner of Janata Party, will desert the party one by one in future, you will not then find even a small trusted, steadfast and loyal cadre to fall back upon in the Valley. The hard core has not only been demoralised and frustrated advertently or inadvertently, but humiliated too".*

The signs of Muslim fundamentalism appeared in a pronounced form in Sopore. In this town Jamait-e-Islami made its existence felt and got elected sometimes its candidate for state Assembly. It was disposed favourably towards secessionist elements. But Muslim fundamentalism appeared more aggressive and some how in crude form underlining secessionist movement, in the district of Anantnag.

At the various and different communally swayed places in the Valley however, threatening posters were pasted, some times asking Hindus to vacate Kashmir, other times counselling them to convert to Islam or to face consequences Even speeches were made by some Muslim fundamentals to this effect for many years. The warning came but no concrete steps were ever taken by the Government to crush this mentality. In some of the posters, the start of "Jehad" (religious war) was announced and in other posters establishment of "Islamic Republic of Kashmir" was declared and yet in other posters the dead lines for conversion or facing destruction were fixed. A series of posters used to be secretly issued and published over long long years. From 1980 onwards anti Hindu, anti India and pro Muslim and fundamentalist activities received a tremendous fillip. No sweeping judgement at that time could be passed as to whether "Alfatah" and "Plebiscite Front" was activised in the guise of ruling National Conference or the other fundamentalists, disruptionists and secessionists were really doing their activities exclusively and independently or in connivance with some important and influential elements in the Government as well as in the ruling National Conference.

The old methods of seeking Muslim unity and consolidation as well as flaring them up with slogans of anti in fidelity "Jehad" was the sheet anchor of their anti India and anti Hindu policies to widen their sphere of activities. Disputes over temples, shrines and their properties were raised and situations communalised. The aggrieved All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference Anantnag, said in a resolution passed on July 31, 1985 in an emergency session.

> *"This extraordinary meeting of Pandits of Anantnag district places on record its deep sense of shock and sorrow at the communal attitude of a section of majority community aided and abetted by some prominent political parties in disallowing this tiny minority community perform-*

> *ance of just and legal rights of their places of worhsip which have been virtually usurped by vested communal elements, the fundamentalist and others who appear to be bent upon destabilizing the age old communal amity otherwise existing in our State. The planned campaign of creating trouble around Hindu shrines and laying illegal claims over the places of worship belonging to the minority and harassing the members of the minority under the garb of unnecessary and provocative litigation, has created a sense of insecurity in this tiny minority of this unfortunate state. The chain of events right from the village Batsargam to Siligam to Vitasta Verinag to Lok Bhawan to Tral and now to the well knit plan to terrorise the minority community and possibly to divest them of their religious obligations. The apparent indifference and helplessness being demonstrated by those in authority in dilly-dallying the so called disputes pertaining to the places of worship of this unfortunate community, has been reduced to the status of 2nd class citizens or even less, if they happen to be one".*[177]

The community had been clamouring that their places of worhsip have regularly been encroached upon for the long past and that they were feeling insecure and being treated as second grade citizens, the insensitive rulers in the State and in the Centre remained unmoved. In fact, their apathy towards their hue and cry and wail and woe they had been undergoing, continued partly by design of the authorities and partly by imperceptibility of the gravity of events and the situation. The result was that their agony multiplied and was never mitigated or removed by those who were cast the responsibility to call a halt to the deteriorating situation, creating a problem, more serious than a matter of mere law and order. Boycotting the members of the Hindu community by Muslims in their day to day affairs had started and their sufferings went unabated. The resolution of Kashmiri Pandit Conference further read:

> *"The Government of the day, it appears, is not serious in mitigating the sufferings of the minorities in protecting their just rights. The forces opposed to the cherished ideals of secularism and peaceful co-existence between different communities are roaming freely and carrying on their nefarious activities. The administration's apathy and laxity of legal action has encouraged these groups to esclate the situation. To cite an example: what steps has the administration taken to mitigate the suffering of the minority community of Lok Bhawan which is subjected to complete boycott by the majority community? A Pandit cannot go in for shopping there. The barbar does not want to attend to a Pandit customer. The milkman is not obliging either, and the washerman is not prepared*

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177. *The Martand Srinagar, August 15, 1985.*

> *to undertake the washing needs of a Pandit customer for one simple reason that the members of the minority do not want interference in their places of worship whatsoever. Even the ladies and small children are not spared from the wrath of these urchins".*[178]

Could a miniscule Hindu community live in Kashmir Valley under such shocking and suffocating circumstances? The members of this community were passing through a life and death struggle, but those in authority, did not bother about it at all. The commulative effect of all the events, trends and policies was that Kashmir had been dying, its soul was muzzled and its civilisation and culture trampled over. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah had also given a call for observing social boycott of the Muslims standing for India in mid sixties. But this boycott was observed against Hindus for the first time, though in localised areas, which was likely to permeate other parts of the Valley. Could there be any other situation more alarming and explosive than the one described above? Due to the indifferent Government attitude, the Muslim fundamentalists and the secessionists scored points after points and made the living of Hindus virtually impossible. The resolution also added:

> *"The minority community does not demand any special privileges as a minority but their main concern is the safety of their life and property which is the basic task of any civilised administration...Lok Bahwan is the signal and signpost of the policies of the government regarding its attitude towards the state minority. The minority community has been driven to the inescapable conclusion that the administration is ineffective to maintain law and order and to safeguard the just interests of the peace loving citizens particularly of the minority community".*[179]

Desecration of Hindu temples and shrines had become a usual affair in the Kashmir Valley. Anti Hindu and anti national elements would encroach upon, damage and plunder these places of worhsip without any fear of resistance or retaliation. This boosted other Muslims to join the ranks against finishing the 'Kafirs' and their places of worship. The government never took stringent measures commensurate with the grave, communal and seditious acts committed freely by Muslim fundamentalists to finish India in Kashmir, by finishing first Hindus and Hindu culture in Kashmir. The signals were clear and it had to reach, therefore, a point of crisis one day. Kashmir government, generally interested in such things, did not do any commendable job in this regard and preferred the things to remain in a state of drift. They tried to cover it up with a superficial and non serious act which could be nothing but an eye wash. And the Government of India, used to do nothing but to appease Muslims, thinking thereby to stem the anti Hindu and anti India

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178. The Martand ,15th August, 1985.

179. Ibid.

upsurge, or at least to defer the bursting of the volcano that was simmering all along.

The governments seemed to have abdicated their powers and duties and did not behave as the Governments ought to. Obviously, therefore, the day was not far off when the disaster had to come and it did come in our life time with all its ugliness. It blasted all that was Indian in Kashmir and finished all that was 'Kashmiriat' in India. The bursting of volcano as was anticipated, mauled Hindus of the Valley. They were scared, tortured and killed or uprooted and kicked out. The nationalist Muslims are also not spared and they continue to be under constant strain and threat of reprisals.

The news of regular harassment indicated concerted and conscious attempts on the part of fanatics to damage and spoil the Hindu places of worship and culture with pristine glory. But no one in authority in Kashmir or in New Delhi ever bothered to ponder and devise ways and means to check the rot and to ensure the safety of the Hindus and their culture in Kashmir and to guarantee against the 'recurrence of such things in future'.

The policy of persecution and profanity against Hindus was not in vogue only in district of Anantnag but everywhere in the Valley of Kashmir. The stone idol from famous Bhadrakali temple in Handwara was stolen by the miscreants in the month of April, 1981. The Hindus of the area launched an agitation for over a month for recovery and restoration of the idol and protested against the police excesses committed against the members of the Hindu community in order to make them submit and surrender before the police dictates. The justice seekers were subjected to police high handedness.

> *"Police made a lathi charge to disperse a procession at Handwara township...over 30 persons were reported to have sustained injuries as a result...Twelve persons have been arrested in this connection as a climax. The procession was organised by the Hindu Action Committee in its month old agitation".* [180]

Valuable idols were stolen by the miscreants from various temples in Kashmir Valley. Many of the guilty men were either connected with political parties or enjoyed government patronage. This state of affairs continued quite for some period and the Government did not seem enthusiastic to crush the trend of stealing the idols, some historically important, with a heavy hand to create a deterrent for future.

> *"The idols of temples of Kashmir being historically important and antique are sought after on national and international markets. This is why there have been more idol thefts in the valley during the past one year. Twenty idols including the famous "Mahakali" image of rare black stone in Hariparbat Fort temple, made under the rule of Maharaja*

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[180] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, May 5, 1981.*

> *Ghulab Singh, the first Dogra ruler of the State, a priceless ninth century image of a deity stolen from Luk Bhawan in Anantnag and scores of items of puja have been unearthed by the police.*
>
> *Terracotta Ganesha, Balram, Shakarpurasha and Nandi idol of black stones have been lifted.*
>
> *.....other priceless images stolen include Shiva linga of Dewan temple. Goddess Kali of Anantnag, fossil image of the thirteenth century and other memorial stones of the fourteenth century.....*
>
> *Five policemen, who had suppressed the first incident of attempted theft of the Mahakali idol of Hariparbat Fort have been placed under suspension...*
>
> *One Pakistani made pistol and a revolver have been seized from the possession of the arrested persons who have been charged with theft, burglary, Arms Act and hurting of the religious feelings of a section of the society."* [181]

The gang committing theft of the idols included *"some persons having political connections"*. In many cases the real culprits *"though identified, were still at large, knowledgeable sources added."* Under these circustances, the police would not like to discharge its duties properly. The sources said that

> *"Police was being pressurised from several quarters including politicians for letting some of the accused free or for not taking any action against others"*. [182]

Alongwith theft of the idols from various temples the campaign against Hindus and their culture had stepped up and assumed wide dimensions. Violent attacks, though secretly yet, were made on the Hindu temples and shrines and a process of damaging and setting them on fire had started. The dharamshalla at the Puran Raaz Bhairava Asthapan, Ghasiyar Hawal, Srinagar, just to cite an instance, was set on fire in the intervening night of April 30 and May, 1, 1984. It was gutted completely.

> *"The fire did not seem to be accidental but an attempt to scare away the members of the minority community by miscreants who were perhaps not happy at the prospect of the shrine becoming a living entity once again," said the Prabhandak Committee.* [183]

The anti Hindu and disruptive activities entered into a new phase by resorting

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181. The Indian Express, New Delhi, April 12, 1985 .

182. The Kashmir Times, Jammu, April, 29, 1985.

183. The President All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference, Dr. S. N. Peshin wrote to the Chief Minister , Dr. Farooq Abdullah about the unfortunate and dastardly acts of the forces out to disturb and wreck the traditional Hindu Muslim unity in Kashmir and demanded to bring the culprits to book., but to no avail.

to more violent methods. Bombs were lobbed in various temples and shrines in order to cause damage and devastation to these sacred places of worhsip which again served as a warning to the Hindus that they could not live in Kashmir as Hindus.

> *"Anti national elements threw a bomb on the Shiva temple, and later set it on fire at Ladwana, near the famous shrine of Kherbhawani......The fire gutted the entire temple complex."*

The incident has created panic in the minority community.

> *" Bombs were lobbed at temples in Srinagar also, which created a scare among Hindus. It was a calculated device to dissuade them from going to the temples and adhering to their way of life".*[184]

A press report about lobbing of bombs on two important temples in Srinagar, and its effect on Hindus, is reproduced below:

> *"Attempts to damage the two important temples in Srinagar last week has created a scare in the Hindu minority of Srinagar. A crude bomb was lobbed on Sri Raghunathji temple in early hours of the night on independence day, and sometime later, another bomb was thrown on the Havan Kund of Sri Ramji's temple near Sathu...these nefarious attempts have served another purpose of those anti-Hindu and anti national elements who are out to damage the age old communal harmony in Kashmir. Both these temples are situated in localities where many Hindus live. Both are frequented by the devout in large numbers. Attendance has now greatly been reduced and women avoid going to these temples in the evenings. What more could be the aim of those who lobbed these bombs to frighten, to prevent freedom of worship and to scare away the minority from these places".*[185]

As already stated, Auqaf-i-Islamia was made a parallel-government, accumulating wealth and property for protecting the Muslim interests and proselytising the Islamic faith and bringing the whole state within its ambit. Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah was the Chairman of the committee. After father, his son Dr. Farooq Abdullah is the present Chairman of the Auqaf Committee.

With the active support of the government from the very beginning, Auqaf annexed lands and properties, which it could lay its hands upon. It received regular government patronage. Any forlorn land or property, believed to have belonged to a Muslim, could be transferred to the Auqaf-i-Islamia without requiring any full fledged enquiry or proof. The other lands also were transferred to the Auqaf, including that of Hindu temples and shrines. The temple land at Saligam village at Pahalgam, for instance, was transferred by the government to Auqaf-i-Islamia under SRO 702 dated December 31, 1981. The secret government activities were

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184. The Indian Express, New Delhi, April 26, 1985.

185. The Martand, Srinagar, August [illegible], 1985.

carried on and entries in the revenue records effected to the ignorance of the Hindus and general public. Whenever a dispute, as such, arose about a Hindu property, their claim was discounted by the disputing party, as the revenue record was generally interpolated and tampered with. The result has been that with regard to many admitted claims of Hindus over their properties counter claims by the Muslims were set up and with the aid and mischief of the government and its officials, disputes were raised to the embarrassment of Hindus. The disputes were mostly coupled with the attacks on the shrines or their properties made by the members of the Muslim community. A press report about Saligam divulges.

> *"The land measuring six Kanals under 347 and 348 min, belonging to the Shiva Mandir shrine in Saligam village in Pahalgam, has recently been shown as belonging to the other party.........*
>
> *In the revenue records, the land's intekal number (Mutation No) 31 dated October 24, 1934, were registered as the property of the temple.*
>
> *It was also registered under No. JE A 727 no ROA-ROA-119-KN 169/ 81 dated August 3, 1981."* [186]

The massive communal attacks made in February, 1986 on the Hindus of district Anantnag and other places in the Valley, damaging and imperiling their life and property, besides harming and desecrating their sacred places of worship, was another shock treatment administered to the peace loving small Hindu minority of Kashmir. It underlined a further development in anti Hindu movement which entered yet another phase. This was a crucial stage for the Hindus as it commenced open, flagrant and virulent attacks on the Hindus and their sacred temples and shrines. This frenzy unleashed against Hindus on a large scale, though unprovoked, seemed an organised affair and a linking lead in the chain of planned and cultivated intrigue against them. The participants in this communal orgy transcended their party affiliations and included the workers of Congress and National Conference.

> *"The week-long unprovoked violence of great magnitude witnessed throughout the Valley of Kashmir, particularly in the district of Anantnag, had far reaching effect. It, however, resulted in demolition of residential houses and shops of Hindus uprooting them in hundreds, plundering of places of worship and molestation of women. This communal frenzy included injuring many Hindus, burning of many houses, and damaging and devastating dozens of temples and shrines, breaking and stealing many idols and throwing others in the river".*

The Anantnag Prabhandhak Committee screamed at the pain and anguish of the Hindu community. It said:

> *"The Shivaratri has come to us with a train of sufferings, set backs and story of hundreds of our Hindu brethren rendered homeless in Vanpoh,*

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186. *The Indian Express*, July 24, 1985.

> *Danov Bhogund, Lok Bhawan and many other places, with at least forty of our sacred temples burnt, damaged and desecrated. The sanctity of our homes in the towns and villeages... have been defiled by ruthless stoning and illegal trespass. This organised communal violence was aimed at annihilating this tiny community from the surface of its birth place, Kashmir. The indifference and laxity of administration was apparent. The manner in which military like operation was carried out, is enough to indicate that preparations for this exercise were made quite in advance, and then executed. The intelligence units had reportedly warned the government, both Central and State about the plans of this militant anti national and communal organisation bent on destabilising communal amity of the state to further their design of secession...The indifference and apathy of other sections of the people and their attitude as passive spectators and the deep slumber of our regional and national leaders has placed this peace loving community at the cross roads of history where their survival is at stake. The number of secular and nationalist elements in major political parties had thinned to such a low percentage that it has become an exception...The shocking incidents........have proved beyond doubt that the minority community in Kashmir cannot take the pledges and promises of their safety and welfare for granted....The total loss of Anantnag district which is running into crores of rupees is being assessed properly. The details of losses of other districts also are coming..*
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> *Kashmir has ceased to be a land of peace and amity. This community has to think about their collective survival in the context of indignity and outrages perpetrated on our members in different towns and villages. The only solution that can sustain our community seems to point towards migration from this Valley. Thus mass exodus of Kashmiri Hindus appears to be the only way of preserving our life and culture. This land has ceased to provide safety to our life and our property and our continued living in this part of the country is fraught with the prospect of our total extinction."* [187]

The note circulated for information of all concerned, some excerpts of which have been quoted above, was signed by Mr. Harji Lal Jad, President and Mr. Shadi Lal Tikoo, General Secretary of Anantnag Prabhandhak Committee.

After this communal havoc was witnessed in Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah showed sympathy with the suffering Hindus but expressed at village Salar during that period of tension that they (National Conference men) also wanted to show them (Kashmiri Pandits) their teeth as they were hankering after the Congress

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[187] *The Martand, Srinagar, March 21, 1986.*

Party.[188]

The Hindus in Kashmir observed total hartal in the entire Valley to register their enmass protest on March 4, 1986 against the insecurity of their life, honour and property. The Hartal was, therefore, simply to focus attention on their uncertain fate and their vulnerableness to Muslim fanaticism and violence. The Muslim fundamentalists and the Muslim press raised a hue and cry over this peaceful Hartal. Instead of coming to an understanding, they sought to create an adverse effect and to drive a wedge between the two communities. While commenting on it, the official organ of All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (Yuvak Sabha) said in an editorial:

> *"Kashmir saw two complete BHANDHS in February 1986-the first on the 5th of the month against Israel's activities in occupied Arab territory and the second on February 11, 1986, in memory of the late Mohamad Maqbool Bhat. Both the BHANDHS caused complete disruption of life in the Valley, with even transport off the roads, apart from skirmishes here and there between Police and the miscreants. To cap it all, the February 5 protest was supposed to be just a five-minute silent affair even in Islamic countries, but here the day came off as a complete bandh. At that time the local press did not react at all. It just carried the news, no comments, no advice. How comes it then that the peaceful protest on March 4, 1986, is sought to be given gigantic dimensions and termed as the conspiracy by communalists and others through out the country, including the national and regional press, against the majority community in Kashmir. This amounts to reading too much in the peaceful protest of which the only object was to focus attention on certain specific happenings with only the small minority here as victims. Should this phenomenon be taken to mean that the minority here does not have even the right to protest peacefully under the gravest possible provocation? Does it mean that the minority has to submit silently to the activities of miscreants of whatever hue, without even heaving a sigh?"* [189]

On the day of Bandh observed by Hindus, a spokesman of the Hindu Action Committee later in a press conference threatened the Government with mass exodus of Hindus if situation was not improved :

> *"if it (Government) did not take effective and adequate measures for protecting Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley, Kashmiri Pandits will have no other alternative than to resort to a mass exodus from the valley if the Government does not help them he said.*
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> *The spokesman alleged that the minority community in the Valley had*

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[188] *Dr. Farooq used this expression in presence of Sheikh Abdul Rehman, who is currently chairman of a Central Government Undertaking.*

[189] *The Martand, March 21, 1986.*

> *been subjected to insults and discriminations since 1947. Enough is enough and we are not prepared to have it any more," he declared...He alleged that the administration had let loose a rein of terror in the Valley against the community and had not arrested the miscreants responsible for riots"* [190]

A deep rooted conspiracy to intimidate, coerce and harass Kashmiri Hindus into surrender and submission, was going on for long. They were regarded by different Muslim fundamentalists, anti India and disruptive elements as a great stumbling block in the way of annexing Kashmir with Pakistan, or in achieving independence and establishing Islamic Republic of Kashmir with "Nizame-Mustafa".The remnant Hindus in Kashmir were also wanted to be converted to Islam and those not agreeing, to be ousted or in the alternative, killed. It was also long back that chanting of this Kashmiri verse in some areas by young Muslim boys had started: "Asseh ghasseh aasun Pakistan, Bataw bagair, Batnev saan" (We want Pakistan alongwith Panditanis but without Pandits). Nobody would take a serious notice of these serious trends and the thoughts that were nourished. When any Kashmiri Hindu used to refer to the thinking as indicated by a section of the Muslim boys, he was cajoled and the matter overlooked and dismissed as a fantasy of the boys. The fact is that everything was made to appear as a fantasy, till the Kashmiri Hindus found themselves lodged in migrant camps outside the Valley after their forced migration from Kashmir. All that our leaders and the governments took non-seriously yesterday, are found as ground realities today in Kashmir.

The ruin of Kashmiri Hindus and uprooting the foundations of India in Kashmir, was brought about in a systematic and planned way. The bureaucracy in Kashmir, contributed to it, directly or indirectly.

In the recruitment to Police in 1983-84, for instance, many of the Muslims with doubtful antecedents, were appointed and even wrongly. Although it raised many eye brows, yet the government carried out its orders after changing the list of the Selection Committee.

> *"The changes, according to sources were made taking into consideration not the merit of the candidates, but on political grounds. Moreover, the list was also altered on the basis of population for representation of various communities, the sources pointed out".* [191]

The intrigue against Kashmiri Hindus was already put into execution. A young Hindu of Karafali Mohalla, Srinagar had gone toKhazanchis, his in laws at Sathu BarbarShah, Srinagar. While approaching his in-law's house he had left for, suddenly a menial Muslim youth fatally stabbed him in the stomach, on the roadside, in broad day light, in presence of the passers by and the shopkeepers. In the Hospital,

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190. *The Kashmir Times, March 5, 1986.*

191. *The Indian Express, January 7, 1984.*

the youngman died, leaving behind a young widow and a daughter of a few years age. Apparently he was stabbed without any rhyme or reason. Initially it was thought to be a case of mistaken identity. That theory was spurned by the assassin himself as he had not to kill any particular person, he disclosed. The version of the assassin which got currency after this murder was committed, was that he was paid money to kill a Hindu. No satisfactory explanation was, however, made public by the police. It is believed that it was an item in the process of harassing, killing and ousting innocent and defenceless Kashmiri Hindus and which was a prelude to regular Muslim terrorism and militancy in Kashmir . Such type of killing was unheard of, in Kashmir. It sent shock waves in the ranks of the small and peaceful Hindu minority in Kashmir. But who could lift the lid off the reality and who could pay heed to their screams?On each and every step, Kashmiri Hindus faced problems of discrimination and endured sufferings imposed. Among other things, some of their houses were damaged at Sopore in early October, 1986. Nine other houses, under construction at Vicharnag, Srinagar, were razed to the ground forcibly with the help of Muncipality. On this and similar other incidents and the attitude exhibited, the members of minority community were gripped with fear and tension. In view of all that was happening in Kashmir, communal riots and other major mishaps were apprehended any time.

> *"In case the majority community does not want members of the minority community to live here, then the minority will leave without offering any resistance and without suffering any major mishaps, for any other part of the country to reside there. The prevailing conditions point to likeliness of communal riots. The incidents of Sopore and Vicharnag create this apprehension....The officers thrust by the Centre are working here against the minority....some elements are bent upon harassing the minority members under one pretext or the other. In connection with the strike of 26th September, threatenings were given to the minority community by way of posters if they would not observe the strike."* [192]

Alongwith destruction of temples and shrines, the priests also were not spared by Muslim fanatics. In the early morning of December 9, 1988, the Mahant of Vicharnag shrine (Srinagar) named Keshav Nath, was murdered in a barbaric manner. The murderer was no other person than the protector, a deputed police constable, who was posted as security guard in the holy shrine.

It was at about 3.45 AM on the fateful day when constable Mohamad Yousuf knocked at the door of the priest, residing in a room of the dharmshala and shouted to him in a provocative language. The priest woke up and trembled at the sight of

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192. This is the statement of Mr. H.N. Jattu, President All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference, issued in Srinagar and published in the "Hamdard" Srinagar, October 8, 1986.

the constable in the night after he unbolted the room doorfrom inside. The Policemen then dragged the priest out and asked him to throw off his sacred thread, recite "Kalima" and embrace Islam. The priest was non plussed whether the Police man was a guard for the shrine or a killer of the priest and his religious faith . He hesitated to follow the command. The constable gave him a severe beating and the chowkidar of the shrine who was witnessing the scene with his wife from his room, appeared on the scene and begged the constable to spare him. The constable threatened the chowkidar also, who rushed to some neighbours and informed them about it. The constable, however, kicked the priest and again threatened and insisted him to convert to Islam. On his failure to follow the command, the guard lashed him by the butt of his gun till the helpless priest died. The priest was thus murdered by the police man mercilessly on the spot. Killing by a person who was supposed to safeguard the priest, was as cruel as it was alarming. What a betrayal of trust! It was also precusor of betrayal of the trust that marked killings of Hindus and forced their mass migration later from Kashmir. Another shock was thus given to the Hindu community.

It was said that the constable was connected with an anti India-Muslim fundamental group and was one of its recruits having doubtful antecedents. Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah expressed concern over the signs of communal virus noticed in the state police force. While replying to a call attention motion in the Assembly, Chief Minster Dr. Farooq said:

> *"It was a matter of shame that a policeman performing the duty of protecting somebody should commit the heinous act of murdering the very same person... During the course of further proceedings, it was learnt through chowkidar of said temple namely, Beant Ram that constable Mohamad Yousuf No. 616 who was on guard duty at the said temple, had pressed the said Pujari to recite Quran and when he refused to do so constable Mohamad Yousuf assaulted him with the rifle in his possession and beat him to death, Dr. Abdullah said. Post-mortem report received in this case reveals that the cause of death is due to multiple cerebral contusions, and internal haemorrhage".*[193]

The DIG of Police Kashmir Division, Veeranna Aivalli IPS, was asked by a pressman about the reasons for militancy and raising its head in Kashmir, he attributed it to the recruitment in police of the persons, having doubtful past. He inter alia, replied:

> *"There used to be Al fateh* [194]*, the so-called anti national party which*

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193. The Kashmir Times, Jammu, December 14, 1988.

194. Alfatah men had penetrated different departmenus of the government alongwith other National Conference workers who were absorbed in the Government after Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front joined it in February 1975, in pursuance of the Accord between Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi *was run by the present MLA Mr. Abdul Rashid Dar from Shangus constituency, was the active member of that organisation. There are certain members of that organisation who are police officers now".*[195]

It reveals how anti India elements inside and outside the government whether under cover of National Conference or any other guise, were active, doing the job of alienating people and Islamising Kashmir.

The preceding pages show that most of the Muslim fundamentalists are secessionists as also subversives and were gathering mass momentum. That they had adopted violence as their creed and the extermination of Hindus and Hindu culture as their politics which was a step to secede from India and form either "Islamic Republic of Kashmir" or to merge it with Pakistan.

It certainly dealt a fatal blow to secularism in Kashmir and was a prelude to insurgency and militancy in Kashmir. it also served as a warning that an exodus of Kashmiri Hindus was in the offing unless some stringent measures were taken, strong and firm policy laid and strictly and honestly followed. The cards were open and clear. But what did the Central Government do? It dragged the Kashmiri Hindus to the point of humiliation and annihilation. It displayed bankruptcy of its political sagacity and lack of administrative acumen. The wholesale exodus of the Hindus from Kashmir did not come about then, but had to occur now in a more mortified manner and in a languorous and drooping condition from the Valley over.

The overall lamentable conditions in Kashmir and the tragic plight of Hindus and violent and vulgar onslaughts on their culture did not awaken our Indian nation nor the Central government from its long slumber. They perhaps did not consider that Hindus could feel secure even after the Accord, in the regimes of Sheikh Mohamad Abdudllah and Dr. Farooq Abdullah (who also connived at anti India, anti Hindu pro Muslim fanaticism and subversive activities in Kashmir) What firm policy could be laid down about Kashmir to ensure saftey of life, honour and property of Hindus, without which India can barely retain Kashmir.

How could this trend be stopped when the rulers themselves threatened Hindus and encouraged Muslim fundamentalists, secessionists and subversives. Dr. Farooq Abdullah openly warned Hindus during Assembly elections, to vote for National Conference and not to look towards New Delhi, otherwise they could not live in Kashmir. While addressing a public meeting in Srinagar in May, 1983, the Chief Minister referred to Kashmiri Pandits that they were ungrateful people, and had conveniently forgotten 1947 when his father Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah saved them from the clutches of Paskistani raiders. He also repeated that the Muslim youths had come up and were impatient and in an aggressive and violent mood. He asked Kashmiri Pandits to vote for National Conference otherwise, warned the

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195. The Submission, Srinagar, October 1. 1989.

Chief Minister, he would let loose the violent Muslim youth and the dead bodies of Kashmiri Pandits would fall and lie in Kashmir while their tattered clothes would reach New Delhi.[196]

These were unprovoked remarks and threats hurled by Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah himself against the original, innocent and gentle inhabitants of Kashmir. It was a slap on the face of India. He nevertheless disclosed his mind. In 1947, however, the plight of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah was worse than that of Kashmiri Pandits. As a result of this, Sheikh Abdullah had shifted his family from Srinagar to Indore for safety. Thus Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah protected his family members including Farooq in the turmoil of 1947. But Kashmiri Pandits remained in Kashmir during that fateful period and many of them were looted, their property damaged and they were brutally killed in different affected places of the Valley. If Kashmiri Pandits had not survived, Sheikh Abdullah also probably might not have survived.

The Central Government, however, had neither created conducive and congenial conditions nor a healthy atmosphere in Kashmir to make the stay of Hindus possible and feasible. The total failure of both the State and the Central Government to ensure safety of honour, life and property of the Hindus in Kashmir, failure even to forestall the militancy, took a heavy toll of this community whose members are, directly and indirectly, driven out of the Valley by the militants. The original residents of Kashmir were reduced to the forced position of displaced persons, known in common parlance now as "migrants", to eke out their existence in camps or in rented premises in Jammu and other parts of the country. As the things were taking shape, exodus of the Hindus from the Valley, yesterday or today, was a forgone conclusion. Why did the Government dissuade them from moving out of Kashmir in 1986 which they might have done in a planned manner? Were they desired to leave the Valley only in more traumatic conditions? What is worse is that they are still made to await by the Government in migrant camps and other places for a better and final decision with regard to them. They are looking to the Central Government for hope and sucour but the Centre is always in disarray and oblivious to their festering sores! The consequences will envelope whole India and the rulers cannot escape therefrom. The Muslims have shown no remorse on the exodus of Hindus. They were not apparently unwilling to the wholesale migration of Hindus from Kashmir. Hindus have only left Kashmir but not deserted it.

> *"We the Hindu minority of Kashmir Valley, feel that the Nehrus have made us a scapegoat of their secular philosophy. This insignificant*

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[196] In a press statement issued on June Ist,1983, Mr. Poshker Nath Koul Vakil, a candidate from Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency, protested against the above utterances of Chief Minister D. Farooq Abdullah, who was also the President of ruling National Conference and demanded disqualification of National Conference candidates on the basis of Dr. Farooq's speech.

> *minority has been and is now with greater virulence, facing inequities in every walk of life. Kashmiri Pandits wonder why they have been the blind spot of Nehrus. Is it because they feared being dubbed as parochial. Should they remedy our grievances? Is it because that great banyan tree of Nehrus had stemmed from the stock of this community which made them indifferent towards our woeful lot?"* [197]

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[197] *The Martand Srinagar, August 15, 1985.*

CHAPTER - XVIII

Alienation, not integration

Every day that passed, brought into sharp focus the swelling ranks of anti national, communal, secessionist and destabilising elements in the Valley. Despite being a component of Indian polity, the relationship between Kashmir and rest of the country did neither grow nor strengthen. The undependable leadership has reduced it to a slender thread, which sustains the link and is guarded more by the security forces now than the alignment and loyalty of the people of Kashmir.

Every leadership bargained and black mailed India in ways more than one. The State rulers exploited Kashmir, ignored Jammu and Ladakh, thought of personal gains, played with communal and religious sentiments, preached and strived for separate identity. This was neither compatible with the urges of national integration, nor conducive for consolidation and unity of the people nor boosted welding of Kashmiris into Indian nation.

The link of Dogra rulers, holding together all the three constituents of the state, i.e., Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh (which in 1947 included whole Gilgit Agency which is now under Pakistan) was missing and the substitute was deformed Muslim rule of Kashmir in the guise of democracy, enjoying all the rights and concessions, some times in the name of being the only Muslim majority "state" in India, other times, falling back upon the "special status" , guaranteed under Article 370 of the Indian constitution. The distinction and monopoly or air of monopoly created about Kashmir, has been misused and abused for creating a wall of isolation and separation between Kashmir and rest of the country. Jammu and Ladakh are and have always been in favour of full and complete integration of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with India. In any case, these two regions stand for banishing all the barriers and long for full integration with rest of the country, emotionally and otherwise. About half of the population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, resides in these two regions of Jammu and Ladakh. They are attached no importance, their demands have always been discounted, and their sentiments flouted. The population of these two regions feel that they have been made subservient to Kashmir and impelled to maintain distance between the state and rest of the country.

This maintaining of "distance" and creating an air of "isolation" under cover of the "special status" granted to the state, are germane to the political maladies and ailments which have enveloped the body politic of Kashmir. The issue of "special status" has always been so much exploited by the Kashmiri leaders that the real integration of Kashmir has always been impeded and shadowed which has created a "psychological barrier" between people of Kashmir and rest of India. And this "isolation:" and "psychological barrier", has been converted into a hatchery for breeding venomous and fatal germs which gnaw deeper into the vitals of the link between Kashmir and rest of the country. It has, therefore, become imperative to destroy this "hatchery" and to remove this "isolation" and "psychological barrier" for all times to come. Much sought after political solution of Jammu and Kashmir lay, therefore, in deletion of Article 370 of Indian Constitution and abolition of the State's "special status."

The funny thing is that this "isolation" of the people is maintained with willingness of their Kashmiri leaders who use the moral and other force, in order to perpetuate it with added vigour. And the Central Government is consenting party to its preservation. The issue is raised then, strangely of course, that Kashmir needs more safeguards and more rights and privileges, favours and concessions, in order to inculcate in Kashmiris, a sense of "belonging to India". Safeguards, favours and concessions are a welcome gesture. But what type of safeguards and favours? The country needs safeguards and if the country is not safeguarded but only a state is safeguarded and :"favours" showered thereon, will not safeguard and integrate the country. Thrusting upon or demanding privileges, constitutional or otherwise, has been a vague and sordid attempt on the part of Government of India, to purchase loyalty of Kashmiris. It has become, as such, Kashmiris' arsenal to blackmail the Union Government.

This has resulted in lesser of "belonging" and more of exploitation and separation. When the "concessions" are misconstrued as a sign of "superiority" and "separatism" , it is disservice to the country and no service to the people and needs to be withdrawn. Instead of developing spirit of "belonging" it boosts up the feelings of separatism. It has not helped Kashmir to come closer to rest of India but has created a wedge causing it to drift away. The sense of creating and maintaining "isolation" or "distance" from rest of the people of the country and its whole gamut of power or enjoying "special status" or "special privileges and concessions" are anti-thesis to "sense of belonging". While former survives, the latter cannot grow and foster. This is not in terms of content only but in regard to spirit too.

How can then both these sets of "situations" co-exist and pull on together? Both the political courses respecting these two diametrically opposite concepts, run stiffly counter to each other. These opposite situations had developed political aberrations and could not be reconciled. Any attempt to make them meet for the good of the country and for the good of the people, caused contradiction, friction and conflict and generated heat.It left wide scope for exploitation and resulted in a tussle and the interested quarters sought to convert it into abhorrence which instilled the spirit of separateness and isolation in the young impressionable minds, particularly. The modes of "isolation" or "separation" or "special privileges" or "concessions" and "special status" may be grouped together and termed as the theory of "Distance". This theory connotes the privileged relationship, political and constitutional or otherwise, between Kashmir and rest of India and its overall impact on the thought process and the behaviours and attitudes as well as on the psyche of the people of Kashmir inside and outside Kashmir.

Once the State of Jammu and Kashmir was set apart, out of all other "states" and "provinces" of India, for a preferential treatment, it imparted a sense of vague political superiority on Kashmiris and inculcated a feeling of separatism in them, psychologically. It could not, therefore, bring a Kashmiri closer to the rest of the country politically nor his mental inhibition, thus created, allowed him to integrate with rest of the country, emotionally. This channel of thinking and emotions ran parallel to the stream of sense of "belonging" without having any confluence. As such the sense of "belonging" could not be fostered nor can be fostered under the prevalent circumstances.

To create a sense of "belonging" in Kashmiris, meant and would mean in this context, only asking for, or getting concessions, more and more even undue. A Kashmiri Muslim would not, as such, draw closer to the rest of the country and would cast away mentally where he was. Obviously, therefore, an attempt on creating a sense of "belonging" in the section of Kashmiri Muslims, turned fundamentalists, by and large, is as misleading and fruitless as it is against national interests. The question of "belonging " does not arise in the face of the theory of "Distance" which has to be discarded and substituted. Otherwise, acting on the concept of "belonging" would not only amount to exercise in futility as it has currently been, but would also harm the national interests.

May it be plainly said that "Distance" theory owned, pursued and practised by both, the Central and Kashmir Governments, has contributed a lot in alienating the people of Kashmir from rest of India. It left scope for the Kashmir leaders for its misrepresentation and exploitation, which they did always unreservedly. It created a sense of separatism among the people of Kashmir, which in turn gave impetus to their nostalgic tendency, ripening it into the firm belief of a large section of the Muslims that Jammu & Kashmir was a sort of separate autonomous state which had to, one day or the other, go on the path of secession, with option to merge either with Pakistan or to have total autonomy by way of complete independence.

From the very beginning of the State's Accession to India, this misunderstanding cropped up and persisted due to the bungling made by Government of India. It was Jawaharlal Nehru in particular and the Government of India in general, which created an issue of Kashmir. The bridge of Kashmir's relationship with India built though on valid and legal footing as well as on constitutional soundness reflected, therefore, an assumed misunderstanding and benevolent mishandling, creating occasional misgivings, which left scope for indifference in approach and for alienation from national mainstream. Jawaharlal Nehru, lost in wilderness of his high idealism divorced from practical statesmanship, misled Kashmiris into wrong belief. Sheikh Abdullah and other Kashmiri leaders took disadvantage of his unwarrented political magnanimity and worked to wreck all that was achieved, and forestalled what had to be achieved in the direction of perfect integration of Kashmir with the rest of the country.

The theory of "Distance" therefore, was not taken in its true spirit and could not cement the mutual bonds. It has failed to serve the interest of the people or the country as a whole. It proved harmful and needs to be done away with. Experience has shown that it has neither any justification nor any relevance, particularly in view of the crucial developments that culminated in the armed terrorism in Kashmir. It has to be abandoned and substituted.

The concept of sense of "belonging", therefore, supports the theory of "Distance". Kashmir had witnessed a powerful popular freedom movement in pre- independence era. It may be pleaded that in recognition of that movement and the role it had played, the "special status" was accorded to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. That symbol of freedom struggle of the people, not be snatched by discarding the "Distance" theory, it may be said. The freedom struggle of Kashmir remained confined to the struggle only and that too in Kashmir Valley alone; it did not bring freedom to the State. It was independence of India that brought freedom to Kashmiris, as part of India after August 1947 when Accession of the State with India was brought about. And this freedom has universal application to all "States" "Provinces" and other parts of India, regardless of the fact whether freedom struggle was launched by the people of that area or not.

The grant of benefit of the freedom was never contingent nor has been dependent upon having launched and undergone the freedom struggle. Citizens of the country, one and all, residents of any part and area of the country are equally entitled to the fruits of the freedom and enjoy the same. If it were not so, then probably Punjab, U.P, Bengal and Maharashtra, for instance, might have claimed more autonomy and freedom, more rights, concessions and privileges, and over and above, "Special Status" than Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. It has not been so, nor can there be any discrimination on that score. How can then "Special Status" survive with respect to Kashmir? There is, therefore, no substance in the argument of retaining or acquiring "Special Status" and "distance" on the plea of freedom struggle. The State of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India under the same law and the same Instrument of Accession, by virtue of which the other princely States of India acceded to India or even to Pakistan. It was no exception in the case of Jammu and Kashmir. How can then discrimination be maintained and observed regarding Kashmir without imperilling national interests and provoking other provinces of India to claim these privileges and "Special Status" which would result in disunity of the peopleand disintegration f the country?

The "Distance" theory may amount to "Status Quo" under certain conditions. Kashmiri nationalism, which within the country, may be enunciated as "Kashmiri sub nationalism", has special traits and certain urges, which should not be suppressed but be allowed to have full play and satisfaction. Adherence to the line of "Status Quo" can help, it may be argued out, to retain these traits and urges and to seek their satisfaction. To meet the urges of sub-nationalism, therefore, the "theory of Distance" be retained and practised, is also pleaded.

This argument also is, however, devoid of any force and justification and is not in consonance with unity of the people and consolidation of the country. If this argument is made to prevail, then of course, India is to be balkanised and bifurcated into many nationalities under the guise of "sub- nationalism" of many provinces and "States", whose people have distinct and different languages and cultures as also special traits and trappings. Every "State" of India can therefore put forth claim for upholding their distinctive features as well as their "sub-nationalism". When all these States pull on as integrated units of the Union of India without "special status", there is hardly then any need for Jammu and Kashmir to have the special and privileged position in the Union. Furthermore, if for this purpose, Kashmiri sub nationalism is recognized and conceded, what is then justification in denying the "sub-nationalism" of Jammuites and for that matter, of Ladakhis? If the urges of all these "sub-nationalisms" of the various provinces of India are to be recognized and met, then the government would be opening the Pandora's box and would be adding complexity to the matter instead of simplifying it. The Centre will thus be weakened and reduced to a helpless state, which is dangerous for India. I have been all along a great votary for "Strong Centre". The "Strong Centre", I firmly believe, will be the proof of and guarantee for strong India.

Another argument that the theory of "Distance", or the "Status Quo"is in consonance with the demand for lesser powers to the Centre and more powers to the "States" as highlighted by some of the "States", which justifies the grant of "special status" to the state of Jammu & Kashmir. While adumbrating on continuance of "special status" a question may be posed: "Special Status" for whom? Is it for those who do not even subscribe to Kashmir being an integral part of the country? If it is so, how bad it is to appease them by conferring. "Special Status", as they cannot claim and do not deserve even the common citizenship rights and benefits in face of their divided loyalty or denial of their citizenship of the country?

It is all the more sad that such elements still enjoy the "special status and privileges"! The regions of Jammu and Ladakh with about half of the state's population and a far larger area, donot want any "special status" for the State. The population of these regions want full and complete integration with India, without any reservations and riders. Is then the "special status" granted and continued because of the smaller area of Kashmir Valley alone? Does it not divide and separate the Muslims of Kashmir on communal and regional lines and entice them away from the national mainstream? Can a small chunk be granted special position within the country or within the State and allow and authorise it to control and dominate the rest in controvention to the national interests? Is it then just and proper to retain the special status? The reply must be in negative. It will contribute to parochialism in the country, which is perhaps lost sight of.

Its another aspect is that the power wielders want to have special status and more and more privileges for themselves than for the benefit of the people. Its advantage is derived by the rulers and not by the public and this has corresponding disadvantage to the masses. The "Special Status" has been an impediment in flowing benefits of Indian democracy to the people of Kashmir and in bringing them at par with other citizens of the country. The Kashmir rulers used (rather exploited) this special position of the State to perpetuate mostly their arbitrary and at times despotic rule at the cost of common man. As a sequence thereof, the people, particularly opposition, lost chance of winning the election in the several constituencies of the Assembly in Kashmir Valley, offending MUF and many Muslim youths.

Abrogation or erosion of Article 370 of Indian Constitution meant, therefore, more freedom to the people and more restrictions on the arbitrary exercise of power by the rulers. The rulers have been, as such, opposing it for their own interests and not for the masses. Application of Presidential order of 1954 to Kashmir regarding fundamental rights (which later in 1956 were incorporated in Kashmir Constitution) made a tremendous differences and checked the State power as it bestowed essence of freedom on the people of Kashmir. Extension of Supreme Court jurisdiction to this State and application of various beneficial labour laws to the State, have been for the good and benefit of common man. This softening the edge of "Special Status " has softened the sharp weapons of arbitrary powers of the rulers and has thus resulted in creating an armour for the people against despotic action and onslaughts of the Government. Why should the "special status" be continued then ? How would the rulers consent then to its deletion.

In the opposition conclave held in Srinagar on October 5, 1983, Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah dealt with the Constitution and Centre-State relations while delivering his welcome address. He inter-alia said:

> *"Our unity and integrity is under strain primarily due to regional disparities and an effort to convert the federal polity, which the founding fathers of our constitution bequeathed to us, into a near unitary form. The founding fathers of our constitution recognized the multi-religious, multi ethenic and multi lingual character of our nation".*

Dr. Farooq and his National Conference have done precious little in this direction in the state. They have themselves strained the unity and integrity of the state and donot treat other regions of the state similar to those of federating units and do not accord them equitable treatment. If that is not deemed improper and against its interests of the State, how can then "near unitary form" polity for India can be proper and in its interests?

Special status of Kashmir presents, therefore, not only regional bias but also national disparity which needs to be ended. The Kashmir leadership was never prepared to work in the state with the same spirit which underlined the Chief Minister's speech. He was never inclined to part with even a moiety of power viz-a-viz the other two regions of the State. He or any other Chief Minister has never liked to decentralise the absolute power that he or other Chief Ministers wielded in the three regions of the State, which forms a sort of separate Republic within the Republic of India. How does then the Kashmir leadership deem it fair to ask for more powers or to continue with the special status for the State and why should it resist its abrogation? Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee had opposed the different political pattern for Kashmir, a "Republic within the Republic", while speaking in the Parliament as far back as in 1952. He had asked the Government :

> *"Could there be a republic with a republic? Was it a question of give and take or were the Kashmir people to take whatever they could get from India without giving any thing?......If they (Union Government) took up an attitude of helplessness in regard to what Sheikh Abdullah was saying, then he (Mookerjee) would like to warn that Kashmir would be lost. They must make up their minds that we donot want another pattern......"* 198

Kashmir is virtually lost and lost particularly to the "migrants" for the time being at least.

The Indian constitution is not on the pattern of American constitution which admits of greater internal autonomy to its states. That would not suit our country. It would be, therefore, fair and proper to bring the State of Jammu & Kashmir at par with other States, which would also afford better opportunities to Kashmiris to avail of the fruits of Indian democracy in a greater measure. Ingress and agress of the people from different parts of our country with right of settlement in Kashmir as citizens, will go a long way to resolve the crisis. When six million Chinese settled down in disputed Tibet with its only two million population, why a large number of Indians cannot settle in India's northern most State of J & K?

After coming to power, Sheikh Abdullah, as indicated in earlier pages, invited in early fifties, five thousand "Kazakh" Muslims to settle down in Kashmir. Obviously, they were all foreigners and strangers, not equivalent to non State Subject Indians. He thereby displayed scant respect for "State Subject" rules and restrictions. This was neither a patriotic move nor a noncommunal gesture. When settling down of Indians in Kashmir is regarded objectionable and in contravention

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198. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, June 27, 1952.

to the "Special Status" of Kashmir, how this extension of invitation to foreign Muslims was deemed non-objectionable? When the principle and restriction is waived in the case of one why should it not be done in the case of our own people? Does it not lead to confusion and clash?

Again in early sixties, a large number of Muslim families from Tibet were settled down in Kashmir. Their influx to and settlement in Kashmir was all arranged on government level. The State government constructed a residential colony exclusively for these Tibetan migrants at Idgah, Srinagar. Funds from public exchequer were lavishly spent on construction of free flats for them. Some years back, more residential flats for them, have been constructed by the government in Hari Parbat area Srinagar. The government extended all concessions and facilities to them and looked after their security and welfare. They have been enjoying all the priviliges as much as they exercise their franchise in the elections to the State Assembly. These Muslim foreigners have been, therefore, accorded superiority and preference over the Indian nationals, who may be residing in Kashmir but are deprived of various citizenship rights including that of casting their vote in Assembly elections.

As against this, not a single Budhist refugee from Tibet was permitted to settle down in Kashmir and all of them are roaming about in different parts of India. The Hindu, Sikh refugees from Muzaffarabad, Domel, Hattian Dopatta, Ghari etc. (all parts of Kashmir) when crossed over to this side of Kashmir Valley in consequence of trampling over of these areas by Pakistan in 1947, they were not allowed to settle down in Kashmir Valley, though they all were state subjects.

The height of things is that Prime Minister Nehru defended in Parliament, the settlement of the above Muslim foreigners in Kashmir Valley. It is a sad commentary on the double standards and dual policies adopted and pursued by the governments both, Central as well as State. Has this policy of appeasement and discrimination led to integration or alienation? The answer is not far to seek. The current terrorism in and mass exodus of Hindus from the Valley of Kashmir, provides the reply.

The theory of "Distance", therefore, does not hold good under the circumstances and must be abandoned and discarded. It may be substituted by the theory of "Harmonious Treatment". What I mean by this is that no special position, political or constitutional, be accorded to or allowed to continue for the State and the people be bestowed benefits of democracy without discrimination and unalloyed by considerations of personal likes and dislikes of those holding the reins of Government in New Delhi. Imposing and thrusting the middle man system has become obsolete and irrelevant in the context of the situation, causing abhorrence to the mass of people in Kashmir. Units of national Parties must be encouraged and local political parties discouraged.

While this theory of "Harmonious Treatment" envisages fair, equal and just slackness, leniency or concession whatsoever, where it has bearing directly or indirectly, on the prestige of the country and dignity of the nation, or if it borders on anti national, secession, disruption, destablisation and militancy.

The harmonious treatment doesnot mean discriminatory or preferential treatment. It will not, however, essentially and always imply equal treatment either What it connotes is an equitable treatment according to the demand of the situation and urges of national interests. This theory needs to be owned and enforced in the backdrop of the country's environs and urges and should always approach the "situation" from national angle but not give harmful local edge to it.

CHAPTER-XIX

The last stroke

Kashmir saw a worse type of corruption in the Shah regime for which it earned ill reputation. To ward off its effect and impression, Chief Minister G.M. Shah tried to pose himself as a champion of "Sunni Muslims" as they constitute an overwhelming majority in the Valley. He, therefore, tried to enlist their support and sought to raise mosques in the state, on official and unofficial level.

> *"Shah Sahib in the gathering of his workers, specifically advised them that in case, they, with their labour, honesty and by the grace of God, reach the Rashtrapati Bhawan also, construct a mosque there too for offering prayers to God."*[199]

G.M. Shah identified the office of Chief Minister with that of an Islamic institution. This identification and amalgamation, which other Chief Ministers also did in Kashmir, was perhaps regarded by him as true secularism.

> *"In my twenty months' regime, I had to face twenty catastrophies. Vice President of India Shri Venkataraman went to the pilgrimage of Vaishno Devi. I accompanied him. After reaching there, he offered his prayers according to his religion, and the priest of the shrine put "tilak" on his forehead. When he advanced towards me, I stopped him and said, "I am a Muslim and according to my religion, putting "tilak" on forehead is not permissible. When the festival of Dasehra came, I was invited to attend this function. I had learnt it in my very childhood that this function was not consistent with our religious faith. As such, I refused to attend the function"* [200]

As already stated, leaders in Kashmir generally tried to provoke Muslims and exploited their religious and communal sentiments to grind their own axe. It was done in one way or the other, before achieving power or after ousting from the seat of power or both. After being dislodged from power, G.M. Shah, opened his mind in several ways. He did not conceal his indifference to the Shiate sect of Muslims which was taken objection to by "Shias". He did not attend a religious procession of Shia Muslims and gave out the reason for non-participation of his being a Sunni Muslim, which was resented. To quote an instance :

> *"Unjeman-i-Sharia Shian has expressed deep resentment and abhorrence on the statement of former Chief Minister G.M. Shah. He has stated that he has not attended the procession of "Ashora" as he is a "Sunni Muslim".*

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[199] *Speach made by Mr. G. M Shah before his workers on 20th March, 1986 , published by N.C.*

[200] *Jammu Kashmir may Governor Raj Kyon, National Conference (K) brochure.*

A spokesman of the Unjeman said that G.M. Shah was not worthy of participating in the "Ashora procession".[201]

Can such type of thinking and preaching fall within the purview of secularism? Does it not inculcate fundamentalism and breed fanaticism? Do Kashmir's leaders, therefore, teach, preach and uphold secularism or an acute type of fundamentalism? This fundamentalism could not be ascribed to G.M. Shah alone, it was and is in fact, common to most of the rulers and the leaders in Kashmir. Shah revealed his mind, others conceal their minds but follow the same policy. All efforts were, therefore, made overtly and covertly, to introduce and practise vigorously this concept of secularism. Indoctrination of people particularly young boys and girls, had to take a monstrous shape, which created havoc but the monster remained invisible. Kashmir was dragged to the present situation and when its effects were experienced, a hue and cry was raised. What effect it can have on the country over all, has perhaps never been thought of. Kashmir always posed these questions which were never taken notice of, by the Central Government and the national parties and the people who pointed it out from Kashmir to them from time to time were sought to be suppressed. National ruling party as well as opposition parties in the country have shirked their duty and shed their responsibility by overlooking the deep rooted trends and tendencies in Kashmir. The ailment was not perhaps found and noticed by them, nor was any diagnosis made thereof. As such, no shock treatment, which the conditions warranted, was ever administered to it.

G.M. Shah evinced lesser interest in reforming the administration and in spreading on healthy lines the tentacles of his organisation National Conference(K) headed by his wife Khalida. His regime was not regarded as a departure from the dynastic rule, as the eldest daughter of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah was heading this parallel organisation against the main one, led by her brother, Dr. Farooq Abdullah. The other pro change elements might have, even then, come out openly to Shah's support, but for his vague intentions and opportunism of the local Congress, they did not. He fell a victim to his own shortcomings and pitfalls as well as to the mischief of the local Congress leadership.

It was by sheer circumstances and mal-functioning of Dr. Farooq Abdullah that the mantle of power was given by the Central Government to G.M. Shah. After he was found fallible, however, his ministry was dismissed and Governor's rule enforced in the State. But no replacement was in sight, which prolonged the rule of the Governor. As is seen in the preceeding pages, no one placed at the helm of affairs bothered to put in efforts to make Kashmir an integral unit of India, not even the national opposition leaders exploited the situation to the disadvantage of the Central Government. To stand by the side of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, was to weaken the roots of India in Kashmir. The leaders did not know what game they were helping Dr. Farooq to play. They thought that by weaning him away from the Congress, they would strengthen themselves and forge a strong link between Kashmir and rest of the country. Dr. Farooq, however, exploited them all for his personal ends.

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[201] *The Srinagar Times, April 2, 1986.*

Dr. Farooq Abdullah was friend of none but enemy of those who would hinder achievement of his ulterior motive, to show down India and gain independence for Kashmir, or at least, total autonomy for the state, as a preliminary step towards independence, which could bring it to pre 1953 position. Dr. Farooq used to see who could suit his interests at a particular point of time and would also use one against the other.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah prompted and provoked his National Conference workers to violence and told them that any Muslim who owed allegiance to any other party should be finished and his property looted and plundered and after that the non-Muslims should be finished. Strong objection raised by one of my Muslim colleagues against this dangerous advice, who happened to be there, created disorder and commotion on the spot. The objector was manhandled by Dr. Farooq and his workers. He had to leave the place, therefore, in the Jeep he had come, without completing his speech. The FIR about this alarming incident was lying with the police. The controversy did not end there and brought me in sharp conflict with the central leadership of Janata Party, which ignored this grave matter. I was then Senior General Secretary of this party in Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh.

Finally, Dr. Farooq exploited all in quest of his goal. I was watchful of this tendency and the moves undertaken, which I opposed strongly. In this connection, a news item based on my statement issued in New Delhi, was published in Hindustan Times on August 25, 1984, which is reproduced below:

> *"The Janata Party in Jammu & Kashmir has urged its central leadership to dissociate itselt from the deposed Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who has been carrying on anti-India activities in the State. In communication to the party leadership Mr. P.L. Kaul, general secretary of the state unit has said that the Vice President of the party Mr. Ghulam Rasool Bhat, had been manhandled by Dr. Abdullah's supporters because he had objected to the former Chief Minister instigating his party men to eliminate pro-India Muslims and burn their property. Mr. Kaul said that Dr. Abdullah had been aligning with Janata and other opposition parties at the national level for his own ends and to use them 'as a cover for his sinister and nefarious activities. At the local level he is keen to crush the Janata Party and other pro-India forces and thereby weaken the roots of Indian sovereignty and integrity in Kashmir'."*

It was a word of caution sounded by me to the nation, that indicated clearly that a volcano was simmering in Kashmir and the tremors of which were felt by those who were in its proximity. They attempted to forestall and defuse it but of no avail. They, however, called upon to evolve, adopt and pursue a strong Kashmir policy, failing which the situation had to go out of hand one day. The opposition whether in power or out of power bungled about Kashmir as much as the ruling Congress had. I did not rest content with it and went further to unfold and highlight the inner picture of Kashmir. It was never meant or aimed at supporting G. M. Shah, a substitute for Dr. Farooq Abdullah, nor I ever intended to support him. But my purpose was to focus the attention of the nation on Kashmir. My colleagues and I were convinced that Kashmir was being distanced from the rest of the country and gravitated to a farther end. A news item published in the Times of India, New Delhi on November 25, 1984, based on my statment issued in New Delhi, is quoted below:

> *"The rebel Janata Party of Kashmir Valley has decided to oppose any candidate fielded by the Farooq Abdullah faction of the National Conference. The State unit of the party is concerned over the activities of Dr. Abdullah, who it feels is maintaining close ties with anti-national elements. It has therefore rebelled against the Janata party at the national level giving support to Dr. Abdullah. The general secretary of the unit, Mr. Pyarelal Kaul, said in a statement that the rebel unit believed that India needed a strong centre and that it should not deviate from the path to federalism".*

Dr. Farooq was already treated and deemed as a security risk and a misfit which had cost him his ministry. Higher echelons of the power and top brass of the Congress in New Delhi were, therefore, deadly against Dr. Farooq Abdullah 's political survival, more so, his coming back to power. His fate had, therefore, stood sealed though temporarily. The Congress Party made its position clear viz-a-viz Dr. Farooq :

> *"In New Delhi Mr. G.K. Moopanar, AICC(I) General Secretary today ruled out any truck with Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the faction of the National Conference owing allegiance to him.*
>
> *Replying to a question if there was any move to have reconciliation with Dr. Abdullah, he said knowing well the anti-national role played by him in Jammu & Kashmir and in Punjab, how can we have any talk with him."* [202]

Muslims in Kashmir were, as already stated, divided into two main hostile camps: Sher-Bakra after 1932. This division is attributed to the administrative talent and political sagacity of Raja Hari Krishan Kaul, who was appointed by the Maharaja as Prime Minister of the State after a communal carnage in 1931. A former ICS man from Lahore, Kaul's ancestors were from Kashmir.

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202. This was the news item transmitted by Press Trust of India (PTI) on October 30, 1984 and covered by a section of the Press

In order to fight out India in Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah thought that instead of adopting a negative approach of fighting and finishing pro-India Muslims and others, it was better to have Muslim unity first. This move was calculated to bring all those favouring India openly, to cloud *per-se* and such elements were to be subdued and suppressed finally. As such Muslim unity was regarded essential and Farooq succeeded for some time in ending the Sher-Bakra antagonism. The National Conference of Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Awami Action Committee of Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq, therefore, ceased to be political rivals, though not permanently. Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah, while in Kashmir, was a staunch supporter of Pakistan and a top leader of pro Pakistan Muslim Conference. After he crossed over the border to Pakistan in 1947, his nephew Moulvi Farooq was made Mirwaiz Kashmir. The mutual factionalism and rivalry, however, had continued and it descended upon the offsprings of the two rival groups of the Muslims. It was acceptance of the political line that the elder Mirwaiz had toed about Kashmir. Dr. Farooq's Muslim unity signified and signalled unity of two breakaway parts of the State of J & K, "Azad Kashmir"and "Kashmir." It was an open process started on public level for cessation of Kashmir from India and its merger with so called "Azad Kashmir".

Acknowledging the end of mutual political hostility and tug of war, the followers of their respective parties hailed both the "young Farooqs" and slogans like "Double Farooq Zindabad" were often raised. The "Double Farooq" had become a sign of victory for the Muslims, victory for making a joint effort for cecessation of Kashmir from India, a first step either for Kashmir's merger with Pakistan or for formation of Independent Kashmir. Whosoever did not like this anti-India edifice being raised on Muslim unity and anti India bias, incurred the displeasure of Dr. Farooq Abdullah. He would become cross with him and warn him of dire consequences. While speaking to the congregation at Jamia Masjid in connection with the death anniversary of Moulvi Yousuf Shah, Dr. Farooq said about the pressure he had resisted for this Muslim unity :

> *"My endurance has been tested and it is for Mirwaiz (Moulvi Farooq) to show how he emerges out of this test. Dr. Farooq Abdullah claimed that he had reliable information that serious efforts would be made to break the historic Sher Bakra unity. The former Chief Minister cautioned people against the "sinister moves breaking the Sher-Bakra unity and added "Remember" that unity brought about after 50 years of long conflict is more important than the person of Farooq Abdullah or Moulvi Farooq".*
> [203]

Farooq Abdullah never endeavoured to consolidate the nationalist forces in the Valley as he never desired to strengthen ties with India. He, therefore, wished

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[203] *The Kashmir Times, June 8, 1985.*

Muslims to show India down in Kashmir by playing the Muslim card. During the course of his speech, he further disclosed his mind about the desire of unity of the two divided parts of the state and also referred to Sheikh Abdullah 's mission to Pakistan in 1964, for the purpose of a united and independent Kashmir. A report said :

> *"He (Farooq Abdullah) was happy to be present to pay homage to "one of the founders of the State's freedom movement whose joy had known no bounds when late Sheikh Abdullah met him briefly on latter's important political mission to Pakistan in 1964.*
>
> *He had himself met, first and last, the late Mirwaiz (Moulvi Yousuf Shah) then.*
>
> *Farooq Abdullah said that the late Mirwaiz was very keen to return to spend his last days in his home place. But the "artificial barrier" dividing the "Indian Kashmir" and the "Pakistani Kashmir", had disabled him from doing so.*
>
> *He declared that the line of actual control dividing the two Kashmirs would disappear some day. Its existence had created a number of human problems".* [204]

Alongside Muslim unity, Farooq Abdullah desired unity of the two separated parts of Kashmir as well. His attack on India and nationalist forces was two pronged so far as Kashmir was concerned. First, to defy, subdue and crush nationalist elements and second, to defeat the Indian authority and sovereignty in Kashmir by joining hands with Pakstan occupied Kashmir, which ultimately was to lead either to Independence of Kashmir or to complete merger with Pakistan. It is what the present crisis is all about. Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Baig also used to hint at it tacitly. Their main plank in 1977 Assembly election was to open the Jhelum Valley road (which connects Kashmir Valley with Pakistan occupied Kashmir through Uri Sector). This demand was several times raised by Moulvi Farooq also. Dr. Farooq, therefore, unfolded his political approach and thought. If the Centre and the national opposition could not understand and decipher what it meant, who is to be blamed? They cannot escape the responsibility and liability for their failure to read the writing on the wall.

What calamity the partition of India brought and human problems that it created, no one, not even Dr. Farooq bothers about, nor any one bewails that tragedy of Indian history today, which occurred due to the obstinacy of Mohamad Ali Jinnah and his Muslim League. The thinking and tendency of those who vouch for unity of two Kashmirs, sound somewhat paradoxical. This thinking, however, lately received impetus by unification of two Germanys. Many Muslims plainly said thereupon, "when two hostile Germanys are united, why not Kashmir". But they do

[204] *The Kashmir Times, June 8, 1985*

not perhaps understand that if India and Pakistan do not reunite, how can two separate Kashmirs unite? They do not seem to realise that the two Kashmirs are also ethnically, lingustically and culturally two separate groups.

The present crisis in Kashmir did not develop within a night. It has its roots in the long past. The remedy therefore, may be "United India", but not "United Kashmir". To know why leaders worked on such plans, wishing a change in the political status, complexion and geographical situation, prompting, instigating and educating people on these lines, is very essential. It is highly shameful that all those in authority either in Kashmir or in New-Delhi, having connived at and bringing Kashmir to present situation, always defaulted with impunity! The funny thing about the "rulers in Kashmir" is that they want to fight out their own country but want to have power too, which however, makes accomplishment of their tasks easier.

Moulvi Farooq belonged to the dynasty of Mirawaiz Yousuf Shah which had stood for Pakistan and remained connected all along with Muslim Conference, till it was wiped out from Kashmir on the advent of popular government. Moulvi Farooq, however, mellowed down some time after he was appointed Mirwaiz Kashmir. The slogan of "right of self determination" exploited by him often in earlier times, died out and he made a departure from it.

After Janata Party came to power in the Centre in 1977, he supported it in Kashmir against Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference during the State Assembly elections and aligned with Janata Party completely. After the rout of the Party in the hustings in Kashmir, he wished to become president of the State unit of Janata Party himself. He convened a small meeting of some persons belonging to this party.

I was one of the participants at the meeting and Moulvi Farooq disclosed his mind and wanted the invitees to help him in this regard and to pave way for it. The party President Moulvi Massodi came to know about the desire of Moulvi Farooq. He worked against it and scuttled this proposal, and himself continued as the president of the party.

He asked for more funds to run the party. The central High Command of Janata Party, however, asked him to render accounts even incomplete accounts of the huge funds sent to the Party unit in Srinagar before and after the Assembly elections. Most of the leaders who had taken the amounts deserted the Party and were not willing to render the accounts. What could Masoodi do then? He was neither prepared to disclose the amounts taken by these persons nor to give out their names. The inflow of further funds, therefore, stopped as no accounts at all, not even vague and incomplete, were furnished to the central office of the Party, which had apprehended that without doing any party work, the funds were misappropriated. I have run the parties always without receiving any funds.

Being wary of the hackneyed and inert leadership and having huge funds wasted and misused without establishing any base of the party, I rose to revolt. Consequently, the main group came out of the party under the leadership of Dr.Abdul Majid[205] and formed Lok Dal. Dr. Majid became its president and I, one of the Vice Presidents of the State unit.

An ultra honest and embarassed Maulana Mohamed Syed Massoodi, found himself alone in the party. He had now company of a couple of workers with funds having been exhausted. He then quietly deserted the Janata Party as if he was never in this party. One day thereafter, Masoodi told me that he was shocked on my leaving the party(I was then member of the reconstituted State Committee of Janata Party) and complained that I had not consulted him so that after a thoughtful consideration, jointly an agreed decision could be taken. Despite all the respects that I had for him, I politely rebuffed him, "Why were you not shocked when you threw me out of the Janata Party and disowned me though I had remained wedded to the politics of national mainstream throughout my life and was also from the constituent unit of the newly formed Janata Party in the centre?" I futher added, "I had requested you in advance to take up the leadership of the party in Kashmir on its formation, which you had declined, what further consultations could I have with you". The political tragedy of Maulana Masoodi was that he was more a Councellor than a leader and he had admirers more than he had followers. He was a king maker but never became a king himself.

Moulvi Farooq, therefore, continued with his Awami Action Committee and wanted to make it a broad based organisation, opening its membership to non-Muslims as well. He also prepared the constitution of his party on secular lines. But Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah never wanted him to survive as a pro-India force in the Valley and swayed and dragged him into his Muslim unity camp later on.

This double Farooq unity gave public the slogan "Sher-Bakra bhai bhai". Workers of both the parties openly strived to weaken the central authority and to wean away Kashmir from India.

In the form of Muslim unity, both the parties assumed communal and anti India posture. This unity sustained even when Dr. Farooq's Ministry was dismissed on July 1, 1984 and he was again inducted as Chief Minister in November, 1986, with the help of Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. During all this Muslim unity period, openly anti Hindu and anti India activities were conducted and the Central grip over Kashmir was loosening, the people were given opportunity to crystallize anti Hindu

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205. Dr. Abdul Majid is a popular and important political figure as well as successful medical practitioner in Anantnag. After 1947, he indulged for long in anti Sheikh Abdullah and anti India activities. He, however, took a positive political decision and joined Janata party in 1977 with the clear mind, giving up totally his anti India fervour and posture. But he became later disappointed with the working and role of the Central Government and the opposition viz-a-viz Kashmir.

and anti India opinion.

After the Assembly elections that followed, Dr. Farooq Abdullah virtually deserted his political ally Moulvi Farooq and his Awami Acton Committee and joined hands with Congress, which they both had jointly and strongly opposed together along with its rule in the Centre as well as the country they ruled. Yet at many times Dr. Farooq would visit Moulvi Farooq's residence secretly late in the nights to have discussions on some issues.

The people had already adopted a strong line against India at their behest partly and partly under the influence of Pakistan. They were, therefore, surprised on the double role of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who was simultaneously instigating public and other elements against India and also was with India for regaining and retaining power. He had become an enigmatic sphinx. Moulvi Farooq, however, gained no power and could not stage a come back. It may not be perhaps gainsay that Moulvi Farooq was lesser anti India and lesser communal than Dr. Farooq Abdullah has been. It was a strange contrast in the ostensible political postures and background of the both. This vacillating attitude earned Dr. Farooq Abdullah more resentment and more foes than he otherwise had in the public. He had to face its result in the Assembly elections which unnerved him and he had to rig the elections and got wrong election results announced about some Assembly seats.

As against Muslim unity of Dr. Farooq Abdullah a parallel Muslim fanatic group in Anantnag was gaining momentum under the name of "Umat-e-Islami". It remained confined to district Anantnag only and was a one man show of its founder, Dr. Qazi Nissar Ahamed. A doctorate in theology from Al Azhar University of Egypt, Qazi was a lecturer at Kashmir University. It is said that on personal considerations Chief Minister Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah had got his services terminated from the University that was the grudge Qazi bore against him. To avenge this "humiliation", he preached fundamentalism to the Muslims in mosques and outside mosques as chief "Mufti" for Anantnag and campaigned against Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference.

Some sources disclosed that Qazi Nissar was intiated into politics by his relation, the then State Congress President Mufti Mohamad Syed to decrease the popularity of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and to take revenge for his ouster from the University. The latter made his effective debut in communal politics of the state in early eighties. After the demise of Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah in 1983, he endeavoured to fight his successor and son Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Qazi Nissar preached against family planning and interpreted it as an unIslamic act and prompted Muslims to produce more and more children, least telling them that even the neighbouring Islamic country-Pakistan also advocated family planning. He stressed the need to increase the Muslim population in Kashmir and openly campaigned for it and offered incentives to the Muslim couples for producing more children.

> *"Dr. Nissar....had opposed the family planning campaign launched in his district Anantnag. He had offered Rs. 21,000 to those couples producing four or more children. He had also defied the ban on the sale of mutton on Janmashtami by openly slaughtering sheep in Anantnag"* .[206]

The ban on killing sheep and sale of mutton on the day of Janam Ashtami, was imposed during the Maharaj's rule and continued even thereafter. It was done by the Maharaja as a mark of reverence to the Lord Krishna. While some Muslims observed the ban even after the end of the autocracy as a courtesy and a moral convention, the other Muslims did not like it as being inconsistent with the concept of Islam. As such, to assert Islamic authority and superiority over Kashmir with no accommodation for such conventions in the concept of Islamic state of Kashmir, the ban was openly defied. It was also sought as an excuse to challenge the Governor Jag Mohan and to seek his exit as he was trying boldly to assert Indian authority in Kashmir and to protect the national interests, which he saw, were going into shambles. All this was not obviously for the welfare of Kashmir. It was Muslim fundamentalism and fanaticism linked up with creating and running a mass movement for cessation of Kashmir from India. Unemployment was never an issue in their agenda, nor the militants who cropped up out of these and similar elements and policies. The unemployment question was only exploited by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, to sideline the real issues of danger enveloping the whole of Kashmir and to hoodwink the Central Government and the people of the country.

The real issues before the subversives, secessionists and fundamentalists were to seek an increase in the Muslim population and establishment of Muslim State with absolute Muslim rule. The Muslims in Jammu, though in minority, also were impressed by the communal stance of Umat-e-Islami and its widening sphere of influence in Kashmir. The leaders of Jammu Muslim Action Committee, imbibed as they were, with the spirit of fundamentalism of this party, rushed to Anantnag to join hands with Qazi Nissar and to preach and work for the same ideology in Jammu. They exaggerated the things and unfolded their mind:

> *"The Muslim Action Committee President, Mr. Shoukat ali Khan and Secretary Mr. Ghulam Ahamad Azad have arrived here (Anantnag) from Jammu yesterday. They went straight to the residence of Umat-e-Islami Chief Mr. Qazi Nissar Ahamad and had an exchange of ideas on the various issues. These leaders told Qazi Sahib that the government had decided to settle in Jammu about nine lakh refugees, who have poured in from the different states. It would reduce the Muslims there to minority"* .[207]

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[206] *The Times of India, New Delhi, September 4, 1986.*

[207] *Muslims are already in minority in Jammu.*

> *"These leaders demanded to preserve the two thousand five hundred houses which were abandoned there by the Muslims who migrated to Pakistan in 1947. The spokessman said that the Action Committee had to set up a branch of Umat-e-Islami in Jammu".* [208]

Governor, Jag Mohan, made himself accessible and available to every individual justice seeker who was always neglected and left forlorn. He did marvellous as well as stupendous work in Kashmir in the first tenure of his rule. He had a passion to work for all people and used to work 12 hours a day and even attended to the individual grievances and complaints of the people. He acted promptly and saw that their grievances were redressed within days. There was neither any red-tapism nor any corruption. Justice was done to everyone and a helping hand was extended to every helpless citizen as far as possible. He endeavoured to streamline the entire administration and cleanse it from corruption and redtapism. That was not all that Jag Mohan stood for, as governor of the State from March, 1986 to November 1987.

During his brief spell as Governor, Jag Mohan did many a splendid work in a shorter period with only little funds available in the government chequor which the popular regimes would not have ventured to do with the same amount. He started immediate construction of a long road from New Airport to Srinagar city, called Indira Gandhi Road. He repaired other roads in the areas of Khanyar and Lal Chowk, Srinagar. He constructed a grand city forest, which had become a spot of attraction in Srinagar for domestic and foreign tourists, besides the local citizens.

After the end of Jag Mohan's rule and after coming to power again, Dr. Farooq Abdullah demolished the "City Forest" and wasted crores of rupees in converting it into a golf ground. Jag Mohan was implementing his schemes for beautifying the cities of Srinagar and Jammu when the President's rule, following that of the Governor's , was ended abruptly. He had his penetrating eye on ecological balance too. He would have done a lot more for Kashmir, had he remained in power for some time more. He was, unlike any other Governor, applying his energies and stamina for the good of the people of Kashmir with a sincere heart to serve Kashmir and out of which he would not have any political gain, as he was not a political entity and more so did not belong to Kashmir, to claim any political benefit or reward from the people. He had endeared himself to the public and earned their admiration who despised their local leaders and rulers which the latter did not like and wanted to dwarf Jag Mohan and adopted techniques and intrigues to harm his reputation and popularity in Kashmir.

The tremendous and commendable work that Jag Mohan did in a brief span of time distinguished him, unlike other Governors of Kashmir, as a foremost and dynamic Governor and it was a positive gain for India in Kashmir. But this gain could not be consolidated and cashed for political reasons due to the fact that Jag Mohan was not a political figure and could not (or did not wish to) channalise it for that purpose. Neither he nor his rule, could be a substitute for political leadership, party forum and the present democratic system of governance. It, therefore, neutralised the gain otherwise achieved.

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[208] *The Hilal-e-Nav, Anantnag, May 20, 1986.*

The Union Government, brought to an end the President's rule in the state, and surprisingly inducted Dr. Farooq Abdullah again as Chief Minister of the State immediately. Thereafter, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi alongwith the newly reappointed Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah came from the winter capital Jammu to Srinagar in the month of November, 1987 and a public meeting was held at Iqbal Park. While speaking to the gathering Dr. Farooq perhaps wanted to impress upon them that there was unity between Hindus and Muslims and he said "I am a Muslim and Rajiv a Hindu". On this utterance , Rajiv Gandhi at once denied in a loud voice from the dais "I am not a Hindu." Rajiv Gandhi's contradiction was inopportune and in bad taste.

The misguided and disgruntled youths and the people in general lost faith and confidence in these leaders whom they blamed for misleading the people and playing with their interests, saying one thing at one time and doing another thing at other time by provoking them to take the bellegrant path, which had cast clouds of perpetual uncertainty. over Kashmir. They wanted to get rid of this "turn coat" politics and misguiding leadership.

Central Government never bothered to soothe even the sincere elements among the Muslims who genuinely wanted to dispel the looming uncertainty and discount the policy of blackmail by their recognized leaderships for all times to come, regarding Kashmir as a permanent part of India. It would open vistas of economic and other opportunities for the common man in Kashmir, they thought, without aid of the undependable leaders, monopolising their grip over Kashmir. They will continue to be provoked and instigated against India to toe this line in whatever form and shape, dominating the scene sometimes in the name of "Independence" and other times in the name of "Kashmiriat" and yet other times in the name of "Islam".

In a broader prospect, it seemed that both the "Muslim Alliances" by and large, shared the same objectives about Kashmir but due to political exigencies, they had no common views. Jamait Islami, an important constituent of "MUF", for instance, was uncompromising with Moulvi Farooq and vice versa and some other constituents of the "MUF" like Umate Islami and Peoples League, were deadly against Dr. Farooq and vice versa. Both the alliances were, therefore, at logger heads with each other. There was no third force or pro-India force in the field nor could there be one, as the same was never grown or even allowed to grow in Kashmir by local and central leaderships.

The people were already dismayed over vague Indianized politics which generally let them down. In 1977 Assembly elections a national organisation, Janata Party, received tremendous mass support . It was popular support ever received by any national party in Kashmir. This was to change the complexion of Kashmir politics. The masses in Kashmir thought that political alignments had changed in Kashmir by defeat of Congress in the Centre and a new pro-India force was to grow in Kashmir, aligned as it was, with the new ruling party in the Centre.

The masses had got a chance to commit themselves and their loyalty directly to India and not through any unpredictable middleman like the Sheikh and his son Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Many of the Janata Party workers were shocked to find their houses damaged, their household articles plundered by their political rivals. Many of them were made to flee their houses, various among them alongwith the families, had found refuge in Islamia High School Srinagar which was temporarly converted into a refugee camp. The occupants of the camp were Muslim workers of Janata Party and their families. It was the result of Sheikh Abdullah's return to power with hooliganism and the open support of bureaucracy in 1977 that he and his National Conference set on the policy of oppression and suppression against his pro-India rivals and their families, as a revengeful measure, who had aligned their fate with India. Rapport with the people of Kashmir was again not established and those who had taken their initiative to establish one, were obviously made to suffer, but were also condemned to be ignored and alienated. Nobody cared two hoots for them not even the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, nor the central leadership of Janata Party.

They chose to woo the weather cocks like Sheikh Abdullah and his son and preferred to alienate other people of Kashmir, losing them ultimately.

The then Governor L.K.Jha, Chief Secretary S. Banerjee and the Army Core Commander in Kashmir, acted as supporters of Sheikh Abdullah in 1977 and persuaded Morarji Desai to help the Sheikh and his National Conference to come to power, otherwise Kashmir would go out of hands and witness a blood bath. These non-political men, ignorant perhaps about the "ground realities" could hardly have conceived that Sheikh Abdullah's 22 years political wilderness right from 1953 to 1975 did not cause "slipping off" of Kashmir then how could it happen in 1977? What has been the position of Kashmir since 1977, one may firmly ask? Has the relationship between Kashmir and rest of the country improved or worsened? The intrigues with respect to "Accession" and "extent" of accession were hatched more efficaciously when the Sheikh and his offshoots were in the seat of power than when they were out of power. Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Janata Party central leadership wanted Sheikh Abdullah to come to power again in 1977 and they did manage it. Home Minister Chowdhary Charan Singh, however, was against it but his view could not prevail.

The Central Government never did shirk from letting down the people of Kashmir whether it was the Congress government or the government formed by the erstwhile opposition. Never any Prime Minister or chief of any national party, barring Indira Gandhi despite her shortcomings and failings, has been vigilant about Kashmir and keen to see that the writ of India ran in Kashmir and the Central authority did not erode. Indira never wanted nor allowed the loosening of the grip overKashmir. Even then she is also not absolved of the responsiblity of creating a mess of the things and mishandling Kashmir. The others have had neither the capacity and stamina, nor the will and patience, nor perception of the ground realities, nor even the courage to delve deep into the matters and set the things right. Every body in power tried to delay and defer the matters and avoided stirring hornet's nest and facing the consequences. They, therefore, rested content with patch work and peacemeal solutions than evolving and following a firm policy about Kashmir.

It is a piquant situation and embarassing position, both for Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir that as Indians, they are subdued and as anti India, they are pampered : When they rise to align with India and speak openly for India, they are, particularly Muslims, suppressed, persecuted and they have to flee to refugee camps, being opposed to the prospective rulers. Their political existence as such, is feared to be a serious threat to the ruler's power. What option is then left for Kashmiris but to go against India or even opt for Pakistan, despite decades having passed after "Accession" to India. Mass support to Janata Party in 1977 was but for a few things, clear expression of this alignment with India, which was discounted and led even to their condemnation. The ignored and alienated people had to go against India, particularly when the local rulers also wished it, who used to preach and boost it and were not prepared and willing to face, resist and crush the tendency of rising against India. Alongside, therefore, this thinking developed among the Muslims that they were weak and thrown to the winds when they spoke in favour of India. The State as well as the Central Government kneels down and appeases them, when they rise against India. Janata Party was finished in Kashmir, Moulvi Farooq found himself in the lurch and Dr Farooq entangled him in his "Muslim Unity Alliance" which he accepted in his dejection. The other elements were left to perish or to groan or to look for other quarters.

In the Assembly elections of 1987 the same situation confronted the people and almost the same picture of Kashmir emerged before them. The ruling National Conference accommodated two persons of Awami Action Committee as recommended by Moulvi Farooq and allotted them two Assembly constituencies in Srinagar to fight the election on National Conference symbol: National Conference, however, entered into an electoral alliance with Congress in the state. They made seat adjustments in all the three regions of the state-Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Congress was allotted six seats in the Valley of Kashmir and National Conference was adjusted against the same number of seats in the Jammu region. One seat each was shared by them in Leh and Kargil.

The opposition vacuum was, therefore, filled in, by the Muslim United Front. But a major difference between the Assembly elections of 1977 and 1987 was that the MUF was not the same as Janata Party while the latter was a thorough pro India and secular party which opposed the ruling clique in 1977, the MUF not only lacked that pro India zest and zeal but had hardly any non-communal and pro India trappings. However, it had not as a joint group openly opposed Kashmir's accession to India. But the fact remained that anti India feelings and forces had gained strength inside the MUF which could not be ordinarily and indiscreetly relied upon. Much, however, depended on the statesmanship and handling of the situation.

The personal interests and lust for power of Dr Farooq Abdullah and his National Conference, buried democracy in Kashmir to the annoyance of masses and the young workers, helping the MUF. Dr Farooq was disillusioned about the success of his party in the polling. He therefore, committed wholesale rigging in the elections. The supporters and polling agents of MUF were threatened and mercilessly manhandled. Hooliganism and government repression was let loose and thus a grand success "was achieved by National Conference in the Assembly elections". Many of the seats, reportedly going to the opposition MUF, were declared to have been bagged by National Conference. Doubts were expressed even about the success of Dr. Farooq himself. The sad aspect of this whole game is that this large scale rigging and wrong declaration of Assembly results, was apparently done with the connivance of the Central Government. Election "victory" of National Conference let loose nothing except repression.

The story of 1977 was repeated this time also but no refugee camps were set up at Islamia School or elsewhere, a tradition which was already established by the National Conference and its government. The camps of consultations and revolt, however, were found in the detention cells itself, where the frustrated youth resolved to take up arms to avenge their humiliation and to fight against both, Kashmiri rulers and the Indians, for suppressing their civil liberties and freedom. The rulers' victory of ballot came to be countered by the force f bullet. They might not have been, however, able to start and sustain the assumed insurgency and genocide of pro India people, had there been no connivance of Farooq Government as well as the action plan and active support of Pakistan to boost them up. The connivance of and instigation from Dr. Farooq, though from early times as shown in the preceeding pages was with an idea to direct and channelise it against India and help himself to become a hero. He erred that basically the movement was against him and his despotic, dynastic rule. His miscalculation and political aerobatics boomeranged, which he paid for.

Total strength of Assembly seats in the State is 76, with a large number of seats (42) fixed for the Valley of Kashmir, 2 for Ladakh and 32 for Jammu region. Even if 20 seats had gone to MUF in the Valley (which was a liberal estimate during the poll) the government would have been still retained by National Conference in alliance with Congress as they did and formed the coalition government thereafter.

Why then the antagonistic attitude was adopted ? The reason was simple that Dr Farooq had to carry on his "nefarious" activities and so wanted to keep Congress (I) under the thumb by having independent and exclusive majority in the Assembly. Congress (I), therefore, was content with sharing the power but could not realise what could be the consequences of the role played by the government. If the central leadership of the Congress believed that Dr. Farooq was right in doing what he did, then why did the Congress leadership clamour for dialogue in Kashmir after Jag Mohan took over as Governor of the state? Was it meant for a rapport and dialogue with Dr. Farooq only who found an alibi to buzz off from the scene for fear of action for his serious omissions and commissions preceding his resignation ? If it were not so what was then to be negotiated about, with the militants and other people? How then could the election rigging and other wrongs committed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah be justified ? The negotiations ought to have been started with the leaders of Muslim United Front (MUF), right then only, instead of hurting them and contributing to the present ugly situation. Every thing seemed in doldrums. With whom the dialogue could be held after resignation of Dr. Farooq from the office of Chief Minister, was in itself a crucial question to be pondered over? All that the Government required, was a firm policy based on logic and actuated by national interests and had to be followed up consistently and tenaciously. This is what applies to the other governments also that followed or may follow the Congress Government in New Delhi.

The coalition government Congress N.C. headed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah doomed Kashmir. In this period, various Muslim missionaries came to Kashmir from other parts of India regularly in bulk which are known in Kashmir as "Allah Vallay". They preached about their mission inside and outside mosques openly and vehemently. It may not have been objectionable per se, provided restraint was exercised. But they used to go far ahead in preaching over the years, not in line with the spirit of Islam, its religious tolerance but Jehad (religious war) against infidelity, condemning India and the Hindus. It was a regular and concerted campaign of vilification against them. They also used to provoke Muslims in Kashmir to fight India and her infidelity and also cast off the yoke of "slavery" and to achieve "independence" and turn out a victorious, if alive and "martyr", if dead in waging this war of Islam.

One day, a former Muslim colleague of mine, (name purposely not mentioned) expressed his concern to me about their preaching of sedition and fanaticism in mosques and the repercussions that this would have in future. I could hardly be of any use in the matter as everything was done with the willingness of Kashmir government and the Central Government connived at. The opposition parties were also indifferent and hardly bothered about Kashmir not knowing that Kashmir was an indicator and the whole country would be involved and converted into a theatre of internecine fight and bloodshed. The grand two day convention that these "Allah Vallays" held in Srinagar in 1989 , was all arranged for and managed by Kashmir Government and the State Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the Law Minister Sheikh Mohamad Maqbool played host to them. They not only supervised the arrangements on both these days but served them personally also. It was a State Government affair which by policy encouraged such fanatic elements and the implicacies had to be perceived, to be detrimental to Indian interests and nationalist elements in Kashmir.

Striving to create and maintain Muslim unity, and boosting up Muslim Missionaries from outside, Dr. Farooq Abdullah opened another front too with state funds in order to penetrate into Muslim ranks under the cover of social reform. He caused setting up of a social organisation for Muslims "Samaj Sudhar Society" in March 1988 and provided office for it in the Muncipal Building, Srinagar, with the then Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir and other government officers patronising it. He asked them to raise funds. Speaking about it at the mosque of Hazratbal, Dr. Farooq announced donation of Rs. one lakh to this society, using his position as Chief Minister and State funds and state officers for its propagation. The state Information Department acted as the publicity wing for this society and issued government press notes about it. A local Muslim newspaper commented :

> *"Information department Kashmir division has issued today a press note under the caption "Samaj Sudhar Society Kashmir". The press release says that a voluntary organisation "Samaj Sudhar Society," formed to end the social evils, has evinced favourable reaction...........It may be recollected that "Aqaf" had already made clear about founding of this Society that in order to improve its tarnished image, the State Government has started exploiting some forums with attractive names under the ruse of social reform and sympathies with the public and has decided to use some new methods and devices therefor."* [209]

This all the more exposed the pro Muslim stance of Farooq Abdullah 's Government and bias against the Hindu population. He had evoked public criticism for excluding and ignoring Hindu community and looking to the welfare of Muslims alone at the cost of state exchequer which breeded communalism.

It is a welcome step to fight against social evils and taboos among Muslims. But it is not fair to use state power and money for their upliftment and discarding their evils to the exclusion of other citizens suffering from the same vice. Even then, it was alright, had it not been politically motivated. It also exposed the tendency and trend of the leaders of the government believing as if no non-Muslim lived in Kashmir and thought in terms of Muslims alone. After all why non Muslims have been ignored and kept out of consideration despite they being the oldest residents of Kashmir?

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[209] *The Aqaf, Srinagar, March 28, 1988.*

Chief Minister clearly spoke at Hazratbal that the Society was meant to uplift the Muslims. Are not non Muslims the residents of Kashmir? Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah, by passed and ignored the anti India activities indulged openly in Kashmir and crossing of youth to the other side into Pakistan occupied Kashmir for receiving training in arms and coming back with arms and ammunition. The Muslim youths recruited for training in arms across the border were openly carried by Buses to Kupwara regularly to cross over to Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The conductors of these Buses would shout "Azad Kashmir", meaning thereby that the Bus was going to Kupwara for the journey of the passengers to Pakistan side of the state. Were such facts concealed from the Chief Minister or were not known to him when these were known to every one? Was the intelligence department so much ineffective, careless and irresponsible that they also did not know these stark realities and did not like to apprise the Chief Minister of these sordid facts ? He was informed and was in know of all such and similar facts, yet he did not choose to put a stop to it.

The confidential intelligence reports submitted by the IGP (CID) to the Chief Minister revealed that as many as his six Ministers were directly or through their sons involved in the militancy, besides the sons of many high ups and bureaucrats. The militants enjoyed the patronage of the state government, which rendered some dutiful police officers ineffective to crush militancy in the bud and to bring to book the belligerents in the initial stages and before the situation became uncontrollable. The Chief Minister did not like to take any action or notice of these secret but alarming reports and developments which he suppressed from the other negligent or ignorant members of his Cabinet. An IGP(since retired) disclosed that the Chief Minister was informed and apprised of all these facts, but neither did he act nor issued any directions to the police in this behalf, the sources further disclosed that the Chief Minister restrained the police from arresting and detaining the miscreants and allowed them liberty and opportunity to consolidate their ranks and to resort to militancy. He even ordered the release of about seventy militants, giving the excuse that they would come round to join the national mainstream, which was just a hoax. They were set to liberty and they again pursued their militant activities and went out of police reach thereafter , which contributed a lot to the expansion of militant network in Kashmir Valley.

"The detention of the released militants was approved by a three member

> *Advisory Board presided over by Chief Justice of Jammu Kashmir High Court. Yet these were the persons who were released by Dr. Abdullah, who is now finding "alibis" for the prevailing terrorism in Jammu Kashmir.During my second tenure as Governor. I ordered their re-arrest but police failed to trace or apprehend any one of them."*[210]

It encouraged not militants alone but other Muslim youngmen too, to take to arms as the impression was gained by the general public that the government was strict and tough only towards those hindering militancy and nabbing the militants and not to the militants. Many of the militants sought after by the police, were often found in the houses of these ministers and the police became apprehensive and hesitant to arrest and detain them. Whenever the police would arrest such militants, the Chief Minister would get them released and thus negatived the police role and action as well as embarassed and imperilled them. All this demoralised the police personnel who feared reprisals at the hands of both, the Chief Minister and the militants. They, therefore, shirked to discharge their official duties and by and by chose to work for and support the militants, some willingly, others reluctantly to save themselves and their folks, which caused break down of the law and order maintaining machinery, on the one hand and on the other, augmented sphere of influence and activity of the militants within different branches of the Government and semi Government institutions and outside in the general masses. Many of the police officers, therefore, found themselves between the devil and the deep sea. In this predicament, some police officers, initially Muslims, were ruthlessly killed by the militants. As such, the field was cleared for the militants by Dr. Farooq Abdullah. He paved way for their consolidation and encouragement also became instrumental in spreading militancy through out the length and breadth of the Valley of Kashmir. Neither the militants returned to national mainstream nor gave up the militancy which was on increase. An old maxim "A stitch in time saves nine" ought to have been followed.

Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah again side-tracked the main issue and hoodwinked the nation by giving another version that the misguided youth had taken to militancy because of frustration due to unemployment. He sought to cover up their activities. The result was that the militants were openly moving everywhere, unhindered and without any threat of arrest, organising and enlisting young men for training in arms and thus swelling their ranks in all the areas of the Valley. The result was mass involvement in this armed insurgency, both voluntarily and also due to duress. Initially, it was for "Azadi" (independence of Kashmir) the pivotal force of which was the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front. It, however, soon took a different turn, which was marked by mushroom growth militant outfits, some standing for Pakistan others with divergent objectives and approaches though

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210. The Aqab, Srinagar, March 28, 1988.

the ultimate aim of all was the same, separation of Kashmir from India.

Some of the militants arrested in October 1989, had among other things clearly disclosed to the investigating agency that two views prevailed among the militants then. One view was that the Hindus should be indiscriminately harassed, terrorised and killed, the second view was that the Hindus should not be unnecessarily killed. The view of harassing and killing Hindus seemed to have found favour. No action was taken by the State or Central governments then as if these governments were non-est and the Hindus were not the citizens and the human beings. About early militancy and violence, causing ding dong battle between the Muslim young boys and the Police, quivering Srinagar in September, 1989, a local newspaper said:

> *"Was J &K police action out of frustration or out of fear? It was difficult to guess, may be a blend of both. If out of frustration they were justified because the youth of the age group of 13 to 20 were stoning them from the alley where the policemen did dare to go when nobody was there, but the traditional women of Maisuma fearlessly taunting the police- And if out of fear, again I say the policemen were justified. I had seen on TV, youth with masks and petrol bombs but on September 8, it was in front of me. It was no less a scene of Lebanon violence."* [211]

Dr. Farooq and his National Conference, apparently never willed to launch a political offensive singly or independently or jointly in collaboration with the coalition partner Congress, to counter and combat the plans, activities and onslaughts of secessionists, fundamentalists and elements of destabilisation. The problem was accute and serious andwas going to become more than a simple question of law and order. The long rope given by design or otherwise to win over these elements or whatsoever motive, was perilous for the people and injurious to the national interests but veritably it proved disastrous for the ruling party, as the challenge was never desired to be met politically or administratively nor, bothered to mobilise the public opinion and to campaign against it initially which would not have allowed things to go out of hand.

> *"Ever since the Kashmir Valley was rocked by disturbances about a year ago, senior police officers and sections of the intelligentia had been calling for a political campaign to check exploitation of the discontent among the people by such elements. They had emphasised that it should not be treated merely as a law and order problem. The Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah did not take serious note of their views initially, presumably in the hope that the trouble would die on its own. However, renewed violence in the wake of a 10 day bandh in the Valley in the first half of April apparently convinced him that, there was no alternative to*

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211. "The Submission" Srinagar, September 25, 1989.

> *political action".*[212]

But no political action was taken. What the National Conference leadership had been preaching and teaching from time to time overtly or covertly in their private circles and elsewhere in the Valley, was translated into action by people and it found crude expression in the violent anti India and anti national campaign. It was, therefore, paradoxical for National Conference leaders to come out openly in the public to give a political fight against what they had themselves been preaching to the public and to deliver sermons against what they had been themselves contributing to, by deed and instigating the people to do, all through. They went to hold meetings in the undisturbed areas and also in the districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region, which were more by way of election campaign for the ensuing parliamentary elections rather than a counter compaign against anti national activities. And that too, at the places where anti India campaign had not started till then. This all was an eye wash.

> *"However, observers feel that the meetings have not created any significant impact in the valley mainly because these have been in the nature of a "one man show", rather than an offensive launched by all sections of the National Conference.......The observers also refer to the lack of direction that marks the campaign. For instance, not a single meeting has been organised in the old Srinagar which has been the nerve centre of trouble".*[213]

The first salvo of the militants took the life of Mohamad Yousuf Halwai-President National Conference, Fatehkadal Block Srinagar. The first masked gun man had, appeared at Khanyar, Srinagar, who fired there at police Station in the month of August, 1989. He was kissed and lifted on shoulders by some amongst the gathering there. The armed terrorism continued thereafter unabated. Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah annnounced an award of rupees one lakh to the bereaved family of Halwai. But he took no concrete and efficacious measures to check and crush the militancy and to forestall thereby reccurance of casualties in the future. He preferred to deplete his National Conference from man power and most of its rank and file tendered resignations and deserted the ruling party for their safety. They made general announcements to this effect regularly through paid advertisements in the local newspapers. National Conference, therefore, virtually remained confined to its Ministers and legislators, and its mass base was eroded. Dr Farooq Abdullah presided over its liquidation happily for his ulterior motives that he wished to achieve. It seemed to be a total collapse of the Government. During the course of a press interview, Syed Mir Qasim was asked if he thought that the government had failed in curbing terrorism in Jammu Kashmir, he replied."There is no

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212. *The Times of India May 7, 1989.*

213. *The Times of India, New Delhi, May 7, 1989.*

government at all and what to talk of failures or success. [214]

Employees helped and worked for militants whose writ loomed large and was obeyed. In the parliamentary elections held in November, 1989 the militants asked the electorate to observe complete boycott of the polling and not to caste any vote. Out of three parliamentary constituencies of Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag, in the valley of Kashmir, National Conference set up its candidates in all the three constituencies. In Srinagar constituency, withdrawal of the two opposing candidates was managed by National Conference. [215] This seat, therefore, went to the ruling National Conference unopposed, the boycott call of the militants was completely observed by the electorate in the other two contested constituencies. Only some of the extremely interested male voters came out and cast their votes in each constituency. During the election to an office of a students union in a school, more votes may perhaps be polled than were actually cast in favour of the winning candidates of National Conference in these two constituencies. The votes polled shown in thousands in each constituency was highly exaggerated as reported by the eye witnesses.

> *"The recently held elections to the Lok Sabha in which one candidate was returned unopposed, the only one instance in the country and on the basis of one percent of the total electorate of the constituencies exercising their franchise...............go to show to what extent the extremists' call for a boycott of the elections worked..................the present elections must still be counted as the worst so far, where even the facade of a democratic poll was not there".* [216]

Even if the government version is taken as correct which stated that 2% votes were polled it, unfolded three things in clear and unambiguous manner : Firstly, the mass base of the ruling National Conference was wiped out totally in the Kashmir valley, whatever the reasons. Secondly, Farooq Ministry had lost the confidence of the people in toto, and thirdly, National Conference had no justification to remain in power after this election.

Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah ought to have, therefore, resigned right then which he did not. Was there any other better method to protest against the failure and misrule of National Conference, demanding mutely but firmly and convincingly resignation of Farooq ministry or in the alternative, justifying its dismissal after total rigging in the parliamentary elections ? How this incompatible situation was allowed to linger on, even though the Indian bases were being shaken

[214] *The "Submission" Srinagar, September 25, 1989.*

[215] *One of the opposing candidate Mr. Poshker Nath Koul Vakil had levelled serious allegations in a press conference held subsequently in Delhi, against N. C. leadership causing his pressurised withdrawal.*

[216] *S. Har Krishan Singh Surjeet, Pamphlet "Situation in Jammu and Kashmir."*

and finished in the Valley ? Didit not amount to defeating the national interests and betraying the country ? Did it not smack of criminal complicity of the two governments, rendering them liable to action for the consequences that followed ? Why the dialogue was not started immediately then with the disgruntled youth or leaders in opposition instead of wishing to initiate it now and that too, with the help of same Dr Farooq Abdullah who is the main villain in this tragic drama and responsible for traumatic position of Kashmir and its people.

In the constitution of Government established Amar Singh Club, Srinagar, some members wanted to introduce amendment so as to throw open its selected membership to non-State Subject IAS Officers borne on the State cadre as well as to army officers posted in Srinagar. An amendment to this effect was moved by Rauoof Ahamed, a member of the Club. A meeting for consideration of the proposed amendment was fixed in October, 1989. The motion of this amendment was sent in advance to the Chairman of the Club, Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

As the amendment was against his political creed and policy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah avoided to attend this meeting and reportedly played a trick. He requested the Vice Chairman of the Club, the Chief Justice of the State (Dr. Adrash Sein Anand as he then was)to preside over the scheduled meeting, which he did on the date fixed. The members supporting the Chief Minister's view, opposed the amendment tooth and nail which fell through. The Vice Chairman, however, seemed to have acted with more prudence and refrained to give any verdict. He announced that he would send the record of the meeting to the Chairman to announce the decision.

In order to boost up and endorse meanwhile, tacitly though, unauthorised doings of the militants, the Chairman of the Club Dr. Farooq Abdullha instructed the Secretary of the Club, Hardev Singh on phone in November, 1989 to stop the sale and consumption of liquor in Amar Singh Club. The instructions were carried out and thus approval was accorded by the Chief Minister to the acts and commands of the militants on government level.

A member of the Club, Prof. M.L. Raina was among others, surprised on the double standard of the Chief Minister. While the latter put to discussion the above amendment in a formal meeting, he without reference to the members of the Club, took an arbitrary and unilateral decision about prohibiting liquor in Amar Singh Club. The former sent a letter to the chairman thereupon, seeking certain clarifications in this regard which was never acknowledged.[217]

Spokesman of Dr Farooq's Ministry and Information Minister, Ali Mohamad Sagar gave a sugar coated pill to the nation when he said publicly that the dialogue be started with the militants on restoration of pre-1953 position in

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[217] *Amar Singh Club, Srinagar is a Government Club. By virtue of constitution of this Club, The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir is ex-officio Chairman of the Club and the Chief Justice of the State is its ex-officio Vice Chairman.*

Kashmir. The cat was out of the bag. This is why National Conference remained in power. Its government worked for weakening the tie of Kashmir with rest of the country and not for strengthening it. How diabolical game was played by its leadership? Those very people who created those conditions, poked their nose in the early stage of militancy for initiating dialogue with the militants to weaken the Indian grip and authority over Kashmir step by step. It unwittingly, exposed the mind of ruling National Conference and unmasked the dangerous game it was playing in Kashmir.

It revealed two things : one that the leniency shown and the appeasement bestowed on the militants was not to bring them to national mainstream but to make them and their militancy survive for purposes of blackmailing the Central Government and strengthening the position of National Conference. That is why the maxim "nip the evil in the bud" was not acted upon and applied in crushing the militancy in the beginning when it was a cake walk. Second, the version of Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah that the unrest was due to frustration of "misguided" youth on account of unemployment in Kashmir, was only an alibi to sideline their armed, anti national and anti Hindu activities with purpose and to afford them time to consolidate and to expand their sphere of influence.

It was the Chief Minister's planning to resurrect his father's 1953 position and compel Indian government to reopen the chapter and negotiate to India's disadvantage, on the topic. It was reported that Dr Farooq Abdullah had himself sent the first batch of workers to Pakistan occupied Kashmir in 1984 to receive training in arms and ammunition from Pakistan on the same lines as some misguided Sikh youths from Punjab were receiving.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah sent some of his workers to Pakistan in 1990 also, to receive arms training in order to fight back India in Kashmir. While talking to the Delhi based foreign correspondents in New Delhi, the former Chief Minister made admission of his guilt and said:

> *"I directed my party men to lie low, go across the border, get training in arms handling, do anything but donot get caught by Mr. Jag Mohan. For the former Governor was out to wipe out the National Conference and the Congress from the State so that he could prop up other political parties and hand the power over to them ."* [218]

Dr. Farooq wanted to create such conditions in Kashmir as to invite foreign powers to mediate and settle the problem of Kashmir, so created. His inner mind was working on the lines of his father who wanted intervention of USA in Kashmir to establish "Independent Kashmir". He is still whipping the dead horse. He further said:

> *"Peace could return to the Valley if America could put pressure on*

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[218] *The Times of India, February 7, 1991.*

> *Pakistan to stop interference in the bordering areas. He said the former President of the US, Mr. Jimmy Carter, could be sent to work out a solution, for he had a clear understanding of the matter."* [219]

This is as much an anti-national utterance as it is unpatriotic. Our country has been sought to put to ridicule. Such views have been countenanced by all those who have been at the helm of country's affairs. This tendency has damaged the interests of the country always and, if not curbed, would harm the integrity and bring the country to the brink of disaster.

Farooq Abdullah had hoped that the militants would remain under his sway and control as the erstwhile "Alfatah" activists were helping "Plebiscite Front" and finally merged with National Conference on its resuscitation in 1975. His scheme, however, boomeranged and the militants encouraged as they were, revolted against the leadership and government of Dr Farooq Abdullah. It had to happen as Pakistan was fully supporting the Kashmir militants and vigilantly guiding them. Pakistan wanted to sideline Dr. Farooq and create the new leadership of indoctrinated young militants. His hopes were, therefore, dashed to the ground as the militants received tremendous support and help from Pakistan, both in money and material. They received full guidance from the special cell of Pakistan intelligence. He, therefore lost his grip and influence over them and was, as such, caught in his own web.

In November 1989, he went on a mysterious tour of America and some other places. Certain speculations gained currency in Kashmir about this sudden tour of the Chief Minister. He was also entrusted with some job, it was stated, by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in connection with some secret deal during this visit. As Rajiv Gandhi was not sure of his fate in the elections, he facilitated Farooq's unscheduled visit abroad and he returned to India only after formation of Janata Dal Government at the Centre. He had, been abroad reportedly on two distinct and separate missions which are still shrouded in mystery. He is now trying to stage a come back but the militants have sent a word of caution to him not to initiate any dialogue or political process otherwise they would not spare him also nor would they retreat now.

He, therefore, slackened in his much talked about, starting of political process or dialogue in his attempt to resume reins of power again to do further harm to national interests in Kashmir, for which both he and Rajiv Gandhi are responsible jointly and severally. To give immunity to Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the CPI (M) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet, however, put a cloak of protection on him. He covered the perilous role of Dr. Farooq Abdullah fantastically under the phraseology of *"non-governance"*. He said, *"Farooq Abdullah's non-governance only exacerbated the situation"*. [220]

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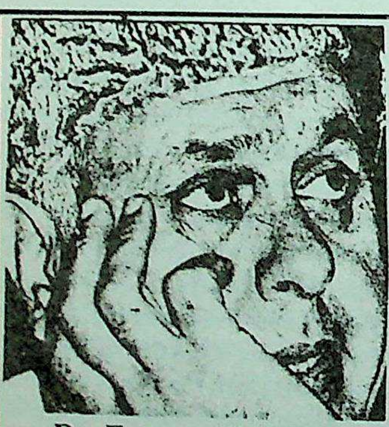
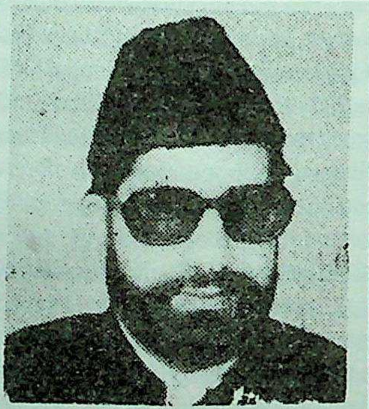
219. The Times of India, February 7, 1991.

220. Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Pamphlet "Situation in Jammu and Kashmir". Mr. Surjeet looks after CPI (M) unit in Kashmir as Party's Central leader incharge.

It is illogical rather dangerous to plead for a person to rule again who is accused of non-governance, which in fact, meant grant of opportunity for commission of any perilous thing again for the country as done already. It was not "non governance" of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, but his calculated and planned political move to defeat Indian interests and to finish pro-India elements in Kashmir. He achieved a great measure of success in it but failed to assert as a hero of this whole movement which became his tragedy.



Dr. Farooq Abdullah



Moulvi Farooq

CHAPTER XX

Muslim militancy in Kashmir, foreign aid and influence

Kashmiris are basically gentle, humane and peace loving people and non-violent in nature. It could hardly be conceived, far less expected, that their youngmen would ever vigorously activate themselves in arms to fight mighty state power of the country. While they can articulate their grievances with rigour, they have artifice to survive even in adverse and hostile atmosphere and suffocating conditions. They have also tact and dexterity to do any thing, even to rise to revolt, in extreme compelling circumstances or on being indoctrinated, induced and instigated constantly therefor.

Why then Kashmiri Muslims, resorted to militancy, to finish or drive out all that came in conflict with their thinking and living? Some background came to develop, which was conducive for bringing about the alarming and explosive situation that Kashmir is currently grappling with. That background, having developed on certain reasons and basis, formed however, only an internal cause for this woeful situation. It has external inducement, allurement and pressure as well, which have also contributed a lot in bringing Kashmir to such a pass and in sustaining the crisis for such a long.

Pakistan started armed confrontation with India over the State of Jammu and Kashmir, right from 1947 itself. Another war was waged by Pakistan against India in 1965. It was Pakistan's fully prepared and planned war thrusted on India in Kashmir which was preceded by large number of Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir. The operations were conducted under the code name of "Operation Gibralter". Pakistan President, General Ayub Khan was originator of this operation and himself took personal interest in these operations and tried to make it a well planned and well organised military expedition against Kashmir.

America supplied military hardware to Pakistan, including sophisticated Sabre Jets and strong Patton tanks which were used by her in 1965 war against India in Kashmir. After second world war, another great tank fight in the world was witnessed near Sialkot sector and chamb Jurrian, Jammu, between these two countries. President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan had made his full arrangements to strike in Kashmir, which he did by throwing his entire military hardware in the war theatre to snatch Kashmir from India. It was in this war that Indian army was permitted by Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri to cross international border between India and Pakistan in order to defend the territorial integrity of India at all costs. The daring and dedicated Indian soldiers laid down their lives while bursting and rendering ineffective American made Patton tanks through cracking of indigenous shells close to Pakistani tanks and bursting the same alongwith them, thus damaging and destroying these tanks.

Both, America and Pakistan were surprised on India's capacity to strike the tanks effectively and they mistakenly speculated that the shells and other such materials were imported by India from Russia. It was exemplary valour and military fiat of Indian army together with indigenous material that repulsed Pakistan's surprised but well prepared attack on India. The Indian Air Force personnel faced America manufactured Sabre Jets with Indian made knats, exhibiting super skill and capability and destroyed them by striking these Pakistan operated Jets and bases, ingeniously. It was surprising and praiseworthy that India had made advancement in military hardware and craft and could not be caught napping as Pakistan had speculated and miscalculated. By mediation of Soviet Russia, the war was, however, ended and truce observed by the two countries, which caused the sudden demise of Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahdur Shastri in Tashkant (Russia) under mysterious circumstances and suspicious conditions.

In 1971, again India Pakistan war broke out. This time also Pakistan could not annex Kashmir and both the countries entered into an agreement known as "Shimla Agreement" to settle their differences mutually and resolve their matters of conflict by bilateral talks. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi sought to close thereby the chapter of mutual armed conflict and confrontation. In the wake of this war, Pakistan was dismembered which gave birth to Bangladesh and dislodged Pakistan President General Yaha Khan, from seat of power.

Subsequently, Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan army, General Zia-ul-Haq, ousted, imprisoned and executed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and wielded the entire power himself, resurrecting again the army rule in Pakistan. He, like other Pakistani rulers, was also keen about grabbing Kashmir, but the outcome of wars on Kashmir was before him. He, therefore, reviewed the entire policy on Kashmir and changed the strategy, which is referred to, in the following pages.

Pakistan had always tried to create and boost up anti India forces within Kashmir in order to fight India. External wars alone could not help in snatching Kashmir from India, Pakistani rulers appeared convinced thereabout. Initially Pakistan had rested content with sending money in Kashmir to start anti-India activities from 1952 and onwards. Huge funds from Pakistan came to Kashmir for this purpose. It did not yield any tangible results. Pakistani rulers, however, desired then to have some violent and disruptive activities in Kashmir, which also were tried but could not be carried on a large scale. That had become only an occasional affair.

A plan for guerilla warfare in Kashmir was then favoured by Pakistan. A group of a small number of young men was, therefore, formed in Pakistan for this purpose. "National Liberation Front" (NLF) had already been formed in Pakistan in 1968, which planned to start violence and disruptive and anti-India activities on the soil of Kashmir. The group aimed at launching an armed offensive in Kashmir in order to seek its secession from Indian Union. This was another phase of Pakistan's intervention in the internal affairs of India in Kashmir, through instigation and preparation for armed insurgency, according to a report as far back as in 1968:

> *"The Times correspondent at Lahore reports his meeting with a man called "Rafique", one of the leaders of NLF, shortly before the latter slipped into Indian territory across Wagah. "Rafique" said that an underground organisation was arming itself and creating arms caches all over Kashmir preparatory to launching an armed struggle for secession from India....*
>
> *....A revolutionary council "had been formed to start a military offensive against India.*
>
> *The NLF claims that it has secret arms caches all over the state and that it intends to launch a guerilla offensive when there are enough arms and ammunition to sustain a protracted conflict.*
>
> *....he (Rafique) said the first aim of NLF was to keep the organisation in the hands of the Kashmiri people".*[221]

Pakistan wanted to involve the people for secession of Kashmir as wars alone could not achieve the objective unless internal support was organised and made to stand by. Obviously, therefore, they had at times tried to allure and woo some Plebiscite Front men and at other times, organised groups like "Alfatah" Pakistan rulers, therefore, as a strategy, tried to help and project such elements in Kashmir and remained herself in the background. These elements announced launching of their "armed struggle" for secession of Kashmir independently. Rafiq was further quoted to have said to the "Times", London:

> *" We feel that it would be idiotic to repeat the mistakes of the last 20 years and involve another nation in what we believe is Kashmiris' internal struggle for self determination. If we turned to another nation for help, our voice and struggle would again be lost in an international dispute. The NLF, he said, did not support the non-violent policy of Sheikh Abdullah, the former Kashmir Chief Minister, who is at present campaigning for self determination in Kashmir.*
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> *Rafique describes his movement as similar to the black power agitation in America.*

Whether the "NLF" is a blind for somebody or something is not

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[221] *The Indian Express, New Delhi, May 3, 1968. It was a despatch from its London Correspondent Mr. Sitanshu Das.*

> *disclosed by "Rafique" and cannot be surmised from the Times correspondent's report".*[222]

Pakistan occupied Kashmir called as "Azad Kashmir" was humming with activities connected with armament and imparting training to people as far back as in 1972 in order to create a voluntary force. This force was meant to be used to create turmoil in Kashmir and to fight Indian army. Quoting Daily Telegraph, London, another report from London said:

> *"A mobilization programme was under way during the past few months in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, "Daily Telegraph" reported today from Muzaffarabad.*
>
> *According to its correspondent Peter Gill, under the scheme more than 2,00,000 men between the ages of 18 to 40 have been drafted into "volunteer force" and given basic military training and issued with guns before being sent home.*
>
> *School girls too were receiving similar training and there were also reports of school boys being conscripted into the "volunteer force", Gill reported. These two lakh men were apart from the divisions of regular army maintained by Pakistan in the occupied Kashmir.........*
>
> *Gill quoted Mr Mohamad Abdul Qayuum Khan President of "Azad Kashmir" as saying that he had not "drawn up any long term programme for the volunteers but one day they would get involved in a clash with India".*[223]

Barring certain small sections of the Muslims, people of Kashmir, by and large, did not associate with armed activities against India for secession of Kashmir. The interested political quarters, however, started consolidating Muslims in Kashmir by exploiting their religious sentiments. Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front had opted for power in 1975, than to continue struggle for achievement of right of "self determination".

The Sheikh thus established his hegemony in Kashmir which offended such elements on his double role and that of the other leaders of Plebiscite Front. Jamiate-Islami feeling that its channels to the corridors of power were plugged, vehemently came forward to work against India under the garb of religious activities. No one had, however, zest for power to strengthen the "Accession", but to weaken it and all parties and groups, whether in power or out of power, exploited the Muslim sentiments for their personal ends.

Working on the premise that Kashmir is a Muslim State, the parties looked at things from Muslim view point more than from secular or nationalist angle. A

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221. The Indian Express, New Delhi, May 3, 1968. It was a despatch from its London Correspondent Mr. Sitanshu Das.

223. The Indian Express, New Delhi, April 25, 1972. It was a P.T.I report from London.

seething political discontent was experienced and religious activities escalated. Consequently, a three days "Seerat Conference" was held in Kashmir in 1980. It was sought to be organised and held on international level and was sponsored by Jamaite Islami which issued invitation for participation to the various religious heads of Muslim countries. Some of the guests from abroad did attend it. Among the participants included the Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca.

The Imam spoke in a public meeting in Srinagar and was reported to have addressed the gathering in an acidic tongue and the speech was regarded as fanatic and prejudicial. In "Seerat Conference", some controversial political resolutions were also passed. In the garb of religious activities, political and communal campaigns were being conducted, which fact was tacitly admitted by Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah also. He said about this "Seerat Conference"

> *"The conference, which was attended by guests from abroad, including the Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca, was not utilized for purposes of religion".*[224]

It had caused a flutter in the political circles and such like activities were not regarded conducive for the State. The Jamiat leaders then decided to hold a conference of World Islamic Youth and students in Kashmir in the month of August 1980. This was done in collaboration of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. Saudi Arabia had also issued invitations for this conference. According to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah: "......*invitation to the participants of this conference had been issued from Saudi Arabia. He (Sheikh Abdullah) was at a loss to understand as to how the local hosts of the Conference could bear the costs of such an international gathering*".[225]

The Sheikh had to suggest to the hosts to postpone the holding of the conference for some time as the conditions were not good for such a conference, otherwise, he told them there might then be "no alternative left for the administration but to disollow the conference".

An England based organisation, called Islamic Mission was also working for spread of Islam and was providing guerilla training to Kashmiri Muslim youths to seek secession of Kashmir. It was also providing funds to them to carry on sinister and nefarious activities against India. In reply to a question asked by Rajya Sabha member Jagdesh Prasad Mathur, on March 9,1984, Minister of State for External Affairs, A.A. Rahim admitted that the "Government is aware of the existence of an organisation called Islamic Mission based in the UK". About the details of activities of this group he, however, replied that *"the same were not readily available"*.

Communal bogey in Kashmir, was raised by some individuals and organisations from Kashmir, in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. They pleaded

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224. *The Indian Express, August 1, 1980.*

225. *Ibid.*

for provision of funds to counter the communism and to save Islam and protect the Mosques which were left in a bad condition in Kashmir. Although the allegations were false, yet huge foreign funds were often pouring in Kashmir, which were being grabbed and misused more for political purposes than for religious ends. After coming back from his tour of Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries in 1985, Mir Waiz Moulvi Mohamad Farooq disclosed the wrong impression created in those countries by some Kashmiri individuals and organisations.

> *"Wherever he went, the Mir Waiz said, he tried to correct this erroneous impression and explained that the State was populated by a Muslim majority dedicated to their religion and Islam was flourishing in the State".*[226]

Huge sums of money sent by Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries to Kashmir, were meant to help propagate and spread Islam, setting up and aiding Islamic schools and institutions and for building and rebuilding mosques. This money was also coming for political purposes, for instance, combating the alleged influence of communists, and the country's non Islamic character. However, none of these influences and factors are present or visible in Kashmir which could cause any concern. Part of this money was, therefore, implicitly meant and used for purposes of secession of Kashmir.

These funds have been sent to and realised by concerned Kashmiris in the name of schools and institutions, Mosques and Study Circles, many of them fake and non existent as well as in the name of individuals and groups of individuals. The modes of despatch of money from a foreign country and its receipt and realisation in Kashmir, were different. It was also by way of payments towards an inflated bill for a carpet, for instance, sent from Kashmir by a dealer or manufacturer, to a foreign country. Suppose the concerned carpet dealer or manufacturer sent carpets worth five lakhs to his clients in the foreign country, he would bill for ten lakh rupees. The understanding was to deliver five lakh rupees billed extra, to a particular person, a prospective militant or a protagonist of Islam or a secessionist. The inspiration to the Muslims was both, internal and external, for an armed upsurge.

Democratic Party leader of America Alan Cranston has referred to the role played by Iran and Saudi Arabia in fomenting trouble in Kashmir. He made the revelation in his press conference addressed in Washington on or about July 12, 1990, after he had returned from a "fact finding mission" to India and Pakistan He said:

> *"I was told by sources I consider knowledgeable and reliable that Iran is sending arms into Kashmir and is arming and training separatists and*

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[226] "Arabs misled about Kashmir", a write up by Mr. R.K. Kak circulated by INFA and published by some newspapers. Mr. Kak was a veteran journalist of Kashmir. He passed away in Srinagar a few yeaars back..

sending them back across the border .... Saudi Arabia is reported to be in the picture too and is said to be supporting the separatists financially................ Thus two Middle East Arab nations one of which, Iran is radical and belligerent apparently, are embroiled in an area that for centuries has been plagued with animosities and bloodshed".[227]

Although this allegation was immediately denied by the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi yet it was vouchsafed. It is further asserted:

"No absolute or verifiable evidence that the arming and training of the Kashmiri militants had been officially sanctioned by the Government of President Hashemi Rafsanjani is available.

The sources said the CIA believed that the arming and training of Kashmiri militants was being sponsored by the faction led by Iran's top hardliner, Mr Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, who still held the Islamic revolution of 1978 that toppled the Shah had to be exported to other Islamic countries and areas where Muslims were in the majority".[228]

Alan Cranston himself did not, however, make any amends in his stand and in the statement that he had made. He upheld and maintained the allegation that was published by various newspapers in the country:

"Publicly, a spokesperson for Mr Cranston said that the Senator strongly stood by his charges of Iranian involvement, despite Tehran's strong denial.

Ms. Victoria Lion, deputy Press Secretary to Mr Cranston said that "the Senator stands by his remarks" and asserted that Mr Cranston who is also the majority whip, was an extremely serious and responsible legislator who never shoots from the hip".[229]

Even Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Pakistan herself had been doing all overt and covert acts to start and maintain rebellion in Kashmir against India and the Hindus., A Liberation cell also was formed and regular funds were earmarked for this purpose.

"Muzaffarabad is also the headquarters of the Kashmir Liberation Cell, set up in 1987 to "promote the cause of self determination of the Kashmiris". for which it officially receives Rs 50 lakh a year from the federal and the POK government".[230]

Former Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab Province, Nawaz Sharief, (now Prime Minister of Pakistan) had set up a fund with initial sum of Rs.5

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[227] *This statement of Mr. Alan Cranston was circulated by UNI and published by various newspapers in the country.*

[228] *The Hindustan Times, July 30, 1990.*

[229] *Ibid.*

[230] *The India Today, New Delhi, March 31, 1990.*

crore to help Kashmir militants. Being deeply interested in Kashmir militancy *"he had also threatened the federal government of Pakistan in March, 1990 of withdrawing the unconditional cooperation offered to the Prime Minister..........now people will decide on their own how to help their brethren"*[231]

Benazir Bhuttoo the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, had also donated a sum of Rs.10-crore for Kashmir militants at a rally in Pakistan occupied Kashmir in March, 1990. This is in addition to the support given by Pakistan Government to Kashmiri militants, not announced publicly. Nawaz Sharief is now himself Prime Minister of Pakistan. It is hardly expected of him to deviate from his committed anti-India and pro-militant policy. He has made no secret of it and is still supporting Kashmiri militants, even more vigorously and openly, with men and material.

Governments do not even hesitate to give out false versions about Kashmir situation to the world. Pakistan manipulated a baseless tale that Muslim refugees from Kashmir had crossed over in thousands toherside of the border for safety and protection. It was sought to counteract the forced migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Kashmir and to suggest that Muslims in Kashmir were being killed and ousted. It was an attempt to cover up the real designs of Pakistan about Kashmir and to conceal the actual situation created and subsisting in Kashmir. The allegations were totally absurd and false and the refugees projected fake and pretended. They gave Islamic touch to the turmoil in Kashmir and branded it as holy religious war "Jehad" and collected "Jehad funds". Further report on personal tour of a journalist in "Azad Kashmir" says:

> " Much of the fervour is also fuelled by propaganda, most of it dubious in *nature. Everybody one meets speaks of "hundreds of refugees" who have supposedly crossed over from the Indian side in recent weeks. However, when I ask to meet some of them, the response is evasive. Finally, the "hundreds" were reduced to around 20 families who are supposedly in Bagh, oneof the more remote districts.*
>
> *The current emotional upsurge dominates almost every aspect of life in POK Till recently, Indian-film songs were popular throughout the area. But with the rise of fundamentalism and the strident call for 'liberating' Kashmir new songs have been spawned and lyrics have changed. The most popular cassette in POK available everywhere, is called 'Kashmir Se Aati hai Sada'. The opening stanza of the cassette goes : Allah ho Akbar Marde Mujahid Marde Khudda Talwar utha Maidan me aa. (Allah is great. O warrior of Islam O warrior of the lord, pick up your sword, and come to the battle field). All over POK, in villages and decrepit hamlets, anti-India processions have become almost a daily ritual. Young students carrying placards and banners*

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[231] *The India Today, March 31, 1990.*

> *swarm the streets extolling the public to contribute to the' Jehad Fund' for Kashmir's liberation.*
>
> *The response is awe-inspiring, invariably every Friday, after the afternoon prayers at the mosques, fiery sermons are given on the need to wage Jahad. "It is now or never:" blare the loudspeakers.*
>
> *Being an Indian in POK is obviously a major disadvantage......For the people of "Azad Kashmir" a Muslim is a friend, and a Hindu an enemy".*[232]

Afghanistan saw Pakistan's game in Kashmir and charged her with training and arming the militants in Kashmir and demanded an immediate halt to interference by her in the domestic affairs of her neighbours. Asserting its charge and supporting India's stand, an official statement of Afghanistan Government issued on April 15 ,1990, expressed that Islamabad was encouraging subversion in the northern Indian State. It inter-alia said:

> *"Pakistan as the gendarme of the region, wants to play an adventurist role in the aggravation of the political climate of the region. By pursuing this policy in the region, Pakistan openly resorts to equipping arming and financing separatist forces in the State of Jamamu and Kashmir and is mobilising extensive subversion there. Pakistan is paving the ground in her territory for military training of anti-Indian groups in Jammu & Kashmir and despatch them to India for carrying out subversive activities."*[233]

Pakistan this time, obviously, changed its planning and strategy about Kashmir. Launching of war against India on Kashmir, receded into secondary importance and the accent was laid on internal sabotage, disruption, chaos and confusion, inhuman killings of Hindus in general and selected pro India Muslims in particular as well as infiltration coupled with imparting training in arms to the local Muslim youths of Kashmir, equipping them with sophisticated arms to use these and to act as a local army and providing them all other facilities, was given priority.

Jamaite Islami published and secretly circulated among the militants and their Muslim sympathisers, the guidelines of Pakistan's action plan on Kashmir. The booklet containing this confidential scheme says:

> *"In the first instance infiltration in a normal way will continue to help Kashmiri brethren. They will manage political subversion to catch hold of State administration. Muslim United Front (Muf) is engaged in an intrigue under different constitutional garbs to destabilise the administration and to achieve their aim of setting the entire Government*

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[232] *The India Today*, *March 31, 1990*.

[233] *This news item was circulated by AFP as published by some newspapers.*

> *machinery at naught..........*
> *To begin with we have to create conditions for both unarmed and armed uprising against the state administration..........We want infiltration of our men into the administration so that normal functioning of Police, Banks, Transport, Communication and other departments is rendered useless*
> *..............Such a plan should be followed as may enable us to cut the communication and other links between Valley and Jammu on one hand and between Kashmir and Ladakh on the other. All this has to be implemented most secretly. Special attention should be paid to the road leading to Kargil Zojila and Khar Dungla."*[234]

What is the aim of these operations, creating militancy and insurgency in Kashmir, is also set out in the booklet? These are both, religious as well as political and are the main plank of turmoil and terrorism in Kashmir. It says:

> *"Islam is our aim, Quran is our constitution, Jehad is our path. War till victory; God is great; the war cry of Hizb: Allah-hu-Akbar, Allah-hu-Akbar. The cry of the Hizb, Beware India"*[235]

The waging of war and bringing external thrust was replaced by internal belligerancy supplemented by Afghan guerillas and Pakistan army. Islam was used (or exploited) as a unifying force and a sentimental watch word and "Independence of Kashmir", a political slogan. In order to fight in Kashmir, therefore, guerilla type of warfare, was resorted to, by Pakistan. Although this pattern of strategy by Pakistan was, more or less, that of 1947 type, yet it was more dangerous, well planned and multi dimensional in implementation. This planning and allied activities have been carried out under the military operations and the code name of which is"Operation Topac". Its author was Pakistan President General Zia-Ul-Haq who tried to make it a well considered operation and he embarked upon it right from the year 1980 "Operation Topac" made stringent and significant modifications and improvements on "Operation Gibralter" and the mistakes made previously according to Pakistan, were sought to be rectified in the new military adventurism.

The Operation Topac was guided, conducted and looked after by the covert service of Pakistan, named Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) which has trained Afghan Mujahideen also, and was supervised himself by General Zia till his end came. He had wanted speedy operations, but Pakistan got entangled in Afghanistan and so the Kashmir operations deferred. After heaving sigh of relief on Afghan front, he wholeheartedly turned to Kashmir.

In the beginning General Zia was, somewhat unhappy over the passive

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[234]. "Hizbe Islam", a booklet published and circulated by Jamaite Islami, based on Pakistan's plan to annex Kashmir which lays guidelines for executing the same.

[235]. Ibid.

attitude of Kashmiris and saw no communal and other flare up in Kashmir. He ascribed this to the gentle and peace loving nature of Kashmiri Panditswhich was inherited by Kashmiri Muslims, being the converts. Zia did not hesitate to taunt Kashmiri Muslims publicly for their docile and non-violent nature due to being "Brahaman Zaade"(off spring of Brahmins) and wanted them to wean away from Kashmiri Pandits. The trainees were indoctrinated to kill these Kafirs and those not killed be harassed and terrorised to flee Kashmir. This was a test for "misguided Muslim youths" to become violent and inhuman to wage Jehad ruthlessly on planned armed pattern. It had an advantage of finishing the loyal group of India, and clearing Kashmir of them as also to cease Kashmiri Pandit influence on Muslims,which would render things easier. The plan envisaged infusing communalism into the courts and educational institutions and penetrating of militants in the service cadres and in bureaucracy. These were some salient features of Zia plan as it is called now.

General Zia ul Haq addressed a top secret meeting in this connection in Islamabad in the month of April, 1988. He, interalia, said:

> *"Let there be no mistake, however, that our aim remains quite clear and firm-the liberation of the Kashmir Valley. Our Kashmiri Muslim brethren cannot be allowed to stay with India for any length of time now. In the past we had opted for hamhanded military operations and therefore, failed. So, as I have mentioned before, we will now keep our military operation for the last moment as a coup de grace, if and when necessary. Our Kashmiri brethren in the Valley, though with us in their hearts and minds, are simple minded folk and do not easily take to the type of warfare to which, say, a Punjabi or an Afghan takes to naturally, against foreign domination. The Kashmiris, however, havea few qualities which we can exploit. First, his shrewdness and intelligence, second, his power to persevere under pressure, and the third, if I may say so, he is a master of political intrigue. If we provide him means through which he can best utilize these qualities, he will deliver the goods. Sheer brute force is in any case not needed in every type of warfare, especially so in the situation obtaining in the Kashmir Valley, as I have explained earlier."*[236]

Among the primary tasks, getting hold of the power apparatus of the State, was essential. Ostensible alignment with the Government of India, has to be shown and the favour of some among the power wielders, has to be obtained in adversely affecting the vital organs of the State, General Zia, further said in the meeting:

> *"In the first phase, which may, if necessary, last couple of years we will assist our Kashmir brethren in getting hold of the power apparatus of the State by political subversion and intrigue. I would like to mention here*

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[236] *The Indian Defence Review, reproduced by Koshur Samachar, March, 1990.*

> *that as no Government can survive in occupied Kashmir unless it has the tacit approval of Delhi, it would be unrealistic to believe that the MUF or any such organisation can seize power through democratic or other means. In view of this, power must "apparently" remain with those whom New Delhi favours. We must, therefore, ensure that certain "favoured politicians" from the ruling elite be selected who would collaborate with us in subverting all effective organs of the state".*[327]

After going through the preceding pages of this book, can it be speculated whose collaboration Pakistan had sought or who satisfied these requirements. Has Pakistan suceeded in her plan and has the power apparatus of the State helped her to achieve success in her first phase of operations in Kashmir and could any Government be so helpful in this target other than the one that was in the saddle when the militancy started in Kashmir and killings ensued. If the omissions and commissions of Dr Farooq Abdullah and some of his NC Ministers, obviously under his influence, are postmortemed, as done in this book, can the blame be apportioned on them? Could anyother person or authority have acted in more collaboration with Pakistan or even unwittingly subscribed to the plan of Zia, bringing Kashmir to the present situation,which even Zia might not have hoped to come about so soon and so successfully. In case, there is no collaboration, but the results that flowed are the same desired results. And it is a miracle in that event, that without having any conscious collaboration, yet he and his concerned colleagues have acted and worked on the same wave length of Pakistan.

Was the power set up the same as General Zia had desired to have for execution of his plan in Kashmir apart from organisation? Did it satisfy the requirement and qualities that General Zia had looked for and had it yielded the dividends? Does the State need such a power apparatus again to serve further purpose of Pakistan and efface India totally from Kashmir and help "Operation Topac"meet with full and marvellous success?

What guide line General Zia had laid in phase I of Operation Topoac, may be taken notice of, in order to examine the similarity in the situation that existed in Kashmir which was apparently reflection of the plan as General Zia had envisaged. He further says:

> *"A low level insurgency against the regime, so that it is under seige, but does not collapse as we would not yet want central rule imposed by Delhi. We plant our chosen men in all the key positions, they will subvert the police forces, financial institutions, the communication net work and other impor tant organisations.*
>
> *We whip up anti-Indian feelings amongst the students and peasants, preferably on some religious issues, so that we can enlist their active support*

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237 . The Indian Defence Review, reproduced by Kashur Samachar, March, 1990.

> *for rioting and anti-government demonstrations.*
>
> *Organise and train subversive elements and armed groups with capabilities, initially to deal with para military forces located in the Valley.*
>
> *In collaboration with Sikh extremists create chaos and terror in Jammu to divert attention from the Valley at a critical juncture and discredit the regime even in the Hindu mind. Establish virtual control in those parts of the Kashmir Valley where the Indian army is not located or deployed. The southern part of Kashmir Valley may be one such region".*[238]

After completion of the first phase, the second phase of the operation was taken up. Pressure was to be mounted up from and on different sectors. The services of Afghans was also to be availed of to intensify the belligerent activities in Kashmir. In the Phase second, he stressed:

> *"Exert maximum pressure on the Siachen, Kargil and Rajouri Poonch sectors to force the Indian army to deploy reserve formations outside the main Kashmir Valley. Attack and destroy base depots and HQ located at Srinagar, Pattan, Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipore and Chowkibal, by covert action at a given time.*
>
> *Some Afghan Mujahideen, by then settled in Azad Kashmir, will then infiltrate in selected pockets with a view to extending areas of our influence. This aspect will require detailed and ingenious planning. The fiasco of Op. Gibraltar (1965) holds many lessons for us here.*
>
> *Finally a special force under selected retired officers belonging to Azad Kashmir, with the hard core Afghans, will be ready to attack and destroy airfields, radio stations, block Banihal Tunnel and Kargil Leh Highway. At a certain stage of the operations Punjab and adjacent areas of Jammu & Kashmir will be put under maximum pressure internally by our offensive posture.*[239]

These guide lines seem to have fully been adhered to, while creating insurgency in Kashmir. Tough fights have taken place between the Indian army, and Pakistan military in Siachin nearer to China, for quite some time and even now the army is alert there. To defend this mountainous patch of the State, the Government of India has to incur expenses to the tune of 3.5 hundred crore rupees annually. It is perhaps the highest costly-mountain range to be kept and maintained under control by Government of India. Lakhs of rupees are spent by Government of India in taking and maintaining a single soldier there in the freezing point atmosphere. It must serveas a sufficient warning to Pakistan and the secessionists of Kashmir that even a barren mountain range "where a blade of grass does not grow" is not handed off by the Government of India, can Kashmir be allowed to slip out of its hands, whatsoever, price may be paid for retaining it?

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[238] *The Indian Defence Review, reproduced by Koshur Samachar, New Delhi, March, 1990.*

[239] *Ibid*

It must, however, again be an eye opener to Government of Pakistan and an indication to the secessionists and fundamentalists of Kashmir that when Afghan Mujahideen can settle in "Azad Kashmir" and fight for Kashmir, why not commandoes and guerillas in large number from rest of the parts of our own country cannot settle down in Kashmir and fight for India? And this is the time when Government of India must facilitate their settlement in Kashmir alongwith othr population. About phase No.3, Zia expressed:

> *"Detailed plans for the liberation of Kashmir Valley and establishment of an Independent Islamic State in the third phase will follows........... .... By the Grace of God, we have managed to accumulate large stocks of modern arms and ammunition from US consignments intended for Afghan Mujahideen. This will help our Kashmiri brethren achieve their godls. Even we create a kind of "Azad Kashmir" in some remote parts of occupied Kashmir (Indian Kashmir) as a beginning, the next step may not be as difficult as it appears today. A period of chaos in the State is essential in the circumstances.*
>
> *Finally, I wish to caution you once more that it will be disastrous to believe that we can take on India in a straight contest. We must, therefore, be careful and maintain a low military profile so that the Indians do not find an excuse to preempt us, by attacking at a time and at a point of their own choosing, at least before phase one and two of the Operation are over. We must pause and assess the course of operations after each phase, as our strategy and plans may require drastic changes in certain circumstances".*[240]

How sovereignty of the largest democracy in the world is being sought to be opposed and laid low in Kashmir and its internal matters flagrantly violated by Pakistan, is a matter of grave concern? This all has been motivated by Islamic fundamentalism. It is the first step towards converting Kashmir into an Islamic state which is then to merge with Pakistan. The alleged claim of struggle for Kashmiris independence, is nothing but eruption of Muslim fundamentalism, receiving also support by Pakistan including armament and training there. It has received indirect support from US and the arms and ammunition supplied by US to Pakistan has been used by the latter againt India in Kashmr and dumped in different parts of the Valley fo use of the militants. The net result has been suffocation and final exodus of Hindus from Kashmir. This contributed largely to militancy in Kashmir. Can this fundamentalism be allowed to continue at the peril of country's interests or it has to be fought out and eradicated? If so, who can do that and how can that be done? It has helped in creating opposite reaction in the country. India has been viewing the

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240. Indian Defence Review, reproduced by Kashur Samachar, March, 1990.

deteriorating conditions with equanimity. The meek policy of Government of India pursued internally and externally, is in itself a great danger for Kashmir. It has been amenable to Muslim fundamentalism and vulnerable to all dangers which heralded killings and mass exodus of the Hindus.

Encouraged thereby, Pakistan in contravention of international laws, norms and morality, as also in breach of "Shimla Agreement", chose to mount an unprovoked artillery attack on some Indian posts on August 20, 1990 at vital mountain passes in Kupwara sector of Kashmir.

The attack, though repulsed, was aimed at providing cover to the militants, trained in Pakistan andtrying to sneak inot Kashmir but feeling hindered to cross over the line of Actual Control, with arms and ammunition to the Indian side, to augment the turmoil and step up militancy in Kashmir. Sometimes skirmishes do take place along Kashmir border but this heavy shelling by Pakistan was unusual which paved way for the terrorist infiltration alongwith equipment.

Instead of feeling remorse, Pakistan toes her line of opposing India and striving to grab Kashmir. India seems to have failed to give a good account of her diplomacy and statesmanship by taking things so lightly in the face of hostile and unscrupulous government of a neighbouring country. Indo-Pak conferences held to settle mutual differences, therefore, do not avail anything.

> *"Reporting to the Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament attached to the Ministry of External Affaris, Gujral termed Yakub Khan's tone as "disconcerting" and "provocative". He told the members that Yakub Khan's reference to the relationship between the people of Azad Kashmir (Pakistan occupied Kashmir) and Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir as well as to the 1965 and 1971 wars was almost tantamount to an ultimatum. The content and the tone of Pakistani message were qualitatively different. They had not challenged India's point blank charges of Pakistani involvement in Kashmir, but instead seemed to justify their position on the basis of a shared concern with the Muslim brethren in India."* [241]

Is there any country in the world which will have shared concern with the Hindu brethren in the northern part of India-Kashmir. There is none. What must be then done and what should happen?

It is no quandary in Pakistan that the aid is organised and Kashmir is ablaze. Pakistan has not her skin directly involved in Kashmir and India is mellow as such, Pakistan brazenly used to hit India in Kashmir, which is, in fact, resulting in damaging and destroying Kashmir and its people.

The present Nawaz Sharief regime of Pakistan has focussed more attention on fighting the proxy war in Kashmir with added vigour and interest, by creating a

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241. The Frontline, February 3, 1990.

"special Kashmir Cell". This is another significant official step taken by Pakistan government to aid and help the militants. A report from Lahore said:

> *"The Special Kashmir cell, according to reliable sources, has been set up on the lines of the Afghan cell which coordinated secret support to the Mujahideen during the 10-year old Afghan civil war.*
>
> *...........Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) may be stepping up its support to terrorists in the Indian part of Kashmir............*
>
> *The special Kashmir cell, created in the highest office of the land, has triggered a wide spread suspicion against the ISI. While people in Pakistan generally donot mind the vocal and moral support given to the Kashmiris by the Pakistan government, the fact that the ISI via Kashmir cell and the Presidents' office may be getting more deeply involved in Kashmir is leading many elements in the Foreign office and bureaucracy to conclude that the ISI is on a different agenda with India".*[242]

Involvement of Pakistan in Kashmir militancy and insurgency is an established fact which the terrorists also acknowledge unhesitatingly.

> *"More evidence indicating the nefarious designs of Pakistan and its encouragement and incitement to Kashmiri youth to indulge in subversive activities has come to the light recently with the interrogation of arrested youths".*[243]

Asia Watch Committee also endorses this fact in its report which has been issued from Washington. The report inter alia, says:

> *"Kashmir militants donot deny that they receive support from Pakistan.*
>
> *......sources have reported that the Pakistan Army's field intelligence unit helped to organise the JKLF in the Indian held Kashmir Valley as early as 1964. In 1988 Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) Directorate had begun to establish training camps in Pakistan occupied Azad Kashmir manned by retired Pakistan army officers.*[244]

The House Sub Committee of USA on Asian & Pacific Affairs, headed by Stephen Solarz, has got convinced of Pakistan's hand in Kashmir militancy and apprehended armed conflict between Pakistan and India on this ground, which might warrant cut in USA aid to Pakistan.

> *"Solarz sub-committee has warned Pakistan that aid has to be cut off to Pakistan under the law if it supports terrorists in Kashmir.....Kashmir remains an extremely worrisome and a potential flash point for war between India and Pakistan....Sub committee members are particularly* disturbed by reports alleging active Pakistani assistance to Kashmir

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[242] *"Youth Information", October, 1990, issued by Information Department J & K Government.*

[243] *Ibid.*

[244] *The Hindustan Times, May 6, 1991.*

militants." [245]

Many of the captured Pakistan trained militants have made no secret of Pakistan's hand in instigating, brain washing and forcing Kashmiri Muslim youth to militancy. Substantiating Pakistan's direct involvement in Kashmir militancy, they said:

> *" The actual commands are given by the Pakistani officials, the militants or the activists of the militant outfits in Kashmir work only as the executers of the commands..Pakistan has planned the whole proxy war very carefully. Militant leaderesuse brain wash technique on innocent youths in the name of religion and 'Jehad' and then involve them in some crimes."* [246]

Alongwith Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir, a compaign of disinformation against India and the security forces is there. Under the guidance of Pakistan, blame is, as such, generally thrown on the security forces for the militants' loot, arson, firing and killings. A Pakistan trained militant, Ghulam Mustafa Malik, for instance ,disclosed reality about an incident of burning of over 70 houses and shops at Chini Chowk, Anantnag, on Oct. 27, 1990, in which he had himself participated. This much publicised incident was wrongly attributed to the security forces. Malik said:

> *"Manzoor Islam and some other militants were t rapped. Finding no other way to escape, the house in which Manzoor was hiding was set on fire which spread to the adjourning shops and houses. This created panic and confusion during which Manzoor-ul-Islam and other militants made good their escape. The entire blame was later put on the security forces."* [247]

Masked militants parading in Srinagar

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[245] The "Samachar Post" Delhi, May 9, 1991.

[246] The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, May 13, 1991.

[247] The Hindustan Times, May 20,1991.

CHAPTER - XXI

Kashmir turned into a game sanctuary

The land of beauty and fantasy, of saints and seers, and of sages and sofis that Kashmir is, hardly conceived to present a grim spectacle of barbarity it reflects now. It had a patent charm, glowing outwardly and a latent solace, impregnating inwardly. It conjured up a pleasing body and a throbbing heart within. To make it more clear, Kashmir has a full-fledged personality of its own; it has a solid physical frame and a sound spiritual mind. Kashmir is not a soulless embodiment of virtue and vice, but has a deep philosophy of human life, of human valour and values and of spiritual heights and attainments. It has a long history too, of human norms and behaviour and of civility and of traditions; a history of a great culture, glorious and enviable. It is what the Kashmiris have inherited and want to preserve. This heritage has been their soul. Their achievements and failures, virtues and vice are their precious heirlooms, which they do not want to part with, but to possess and possess eternally.

Kashmiris have suffered and braved all vicissitudes of life, also intrusions and inroads into and encroachments upon their domain. They have also survived the worst traumas and tragedies that befell them. They reconciled with grave, threatened and perilous situations but did not surrender to such situations. The body and soul of Kashmir, therefore, advanced some times with rapid pace and other times retarded and receded too. Islam in Kashmir is not the same which is practised in Saudi Arabia. It has imprints of religion of theoriginal residents and aborigines of Kashmir and their precepts. It is, therefore, glued with Hinduism and Hindu traditions. There has been occasion, more than one, when the body crumbled but the soul did not part, and Kashmir kept on going. But if body rejuvenates and soul vanishes, Kashmir goes then and that will be death knell for Kashmiris. The present situation of Kashmir, however, leads to that and brings the dooms day nearer. To avert that catastrophe the Central Government need to take, unhesitatingly and immediately, all the stringent and commensurate measures, even unpleasant, as the situation warrants, though the action is extremely belated.

Violence has never been the temperament of Kashmir. It has instead, the delicacy of a flower. It emits fragrance that mingles with the cool and calm of the environs and soothes the people and their wounds. Its melodious breeze has human vibrations and its dew are the drops of nectar. Its snakes too are, therefore, mostly poisonless and harmless.

But today in Kashmir, it all appears to be a tale of days gone by. People have become venomous today. They, and not snakes bite their human fellows. They hound them, not beasts. The gun wielding youths today kill sons and daughters of the soil. They hunt, not wild birds and animals but innocent men and women of the land and have a number of them brutally assassinated, for no fault of theirs.

Armed and organised terrorism was unleashed on a large scale in the Valley particulary since1989, which has not seen its end till date. A large number of persons fell to the militants' bullets. Among the initial casualties were, as already stated, Mohamad Yousuf Halwai, a Block President of National Conference, followed by Tika Lal Tapiloo, Advocate, State Vice President Bhartiya Janata Party. Both were killed near their houses in Srinagar.

Tapiloo had hardly walked about thirty steps from his house at Chinkral Mohalla towards the Court, on September 14, 1989 , when three armed militants fired several shots on him. The occurrence took place in a congested Hindu area. Nobody dared to come forward to save him. The militants buzzed off only after they saw him fall dead. The state government's version that a "Muslim was injured while trying to save Tapiloo"was false. The Muslim was no other person than his own clerk, who had accompanied him right from his residence. The clerk stood aghast when bullets were showered on Tapiloo. What could he do with empty hands except to save his own person. The government, however, did not take stiff measures and made no thorough probe to bring the culprits to book and to check the militancy in right earnest, which was not so difficult then, provided Chief Minister Farooq wished so which he, in fact, did not. It was a clear warning of Farooq Government to the Hindus in Kashmir to change their Indian loyalty or to die or to leave Kashmir. The Congress Ministers abdicated their responsibility and played a treacherous role by remaining wedded to the power at the cost of national interests. Dr. Farooq used them as a tool. Tapiloo's killing was also the militants' first stern warning to the Hindus in Kashmir. It threatened their existence, honour and property. They had to surrender before the militants if they wanted to stay back in Kashmir, Cutting across political affiliations, the Hindus in large number registered a mute protest by way of joining Tapiloo's funeral procession. But it did not evoke the response it should have from the State as well as the Central Government. To ignore the Hindus and to leave their protest unattended to, was done only at the cost of country's interest.

Militants broke into the second storey of the house of a Muslim police officer at Patan. They scaled his house in the darkness of the night with help of a movable wooden staircase brought alongwith. After forcibly breaking open the window, the militants fired on the occupants indiscriminately who were asleep. The inmates includedthe brother of the police officer and his family members. The occupants were critically injured but the wife and children of the innocent brother of the police officer died on the spot.

In Maharaj Ganj area (Srinagar) two Hindu businessmen, though "State

Subject," were shot at in two different shooting sprees by the militants and on two different dates, killing Ajay Kapur the spot. While injuring the third one, son of a victim. On November 4, 1989, at 2'O' clock in the day, the militants again struck terror in the Hindu minority by pumping volley of bullets on Neel Kanth Ganjoo, (a former Sessions Judge) in the busy Hari Singh High Street, Srinagar. The spot was at a stone's throw from the police post on the road, where about a dozen of police personnel are always present and on active duty for keeping vigil and controlling the traffic. Passers by and shopkeepers on either side of the road, witnessed the gruesome tragedy helplessly. Nobody raised a little fingers nor any one came forward to lift the body. The militants disappeared from the scene at leisure when they ensured his death.

On December 27, 1989 shock waves again rippled among the small Hindu minority of the Valley: Prem Nath Bhat, an eminent Advocate of Anantnag and a respectable social and public figure, was shot dead while he was returning home from the Court. A young chemist, Satish Tikku was called out of his house by the militants on the ground of dispensing them some urgently needed medicines. He sympathetically responded to their call and came out, walked some steps when he found that the persons accompanying him were militants as they took out their pistols and fired on him from point blank range on February 2, 1990 and killed him mercilessly, though this stout young man put up a valiant fight with naked hands. His compassion to render medical assistance was rewarded with brutal assassination.

It was again a shock treatment administered to the Kashmiri Hindus on February 13, 1990, when Director Doordarshan Srinagar, Lassa Koul was shot dead. He was just approaching his house to visit his ailing father, after he alighted from his official jeep, when he fell victim to the bullets of the militants at the very entrance. He was deprived from seeing his parents. As a loyal citizen of the country, he was discharging his official duties with devotion and without fear and favour, despite warnings from militants. As a precautionary measure, therefore, he was residing at the T.V. Centre itself. But on the fateful day, he summoned his official driver only 15 minutes before, to tell him that he proposed to visit his parents that evening. Any militant employee of the T.V. Centre or the person having links with the militants,must have immediately flashed this news to the militants. Consequently he was no more within an hour.

In between and afterwards there were hundreds of other Hindus, men and women who were killed by the militants mercilessly. It was gathered that initially militants planned to kill only selected members of the Hindu community in Kashmir, to harass and terrorise them so that they followed their dictates. They might have thought that sufficient to subjugate the Hindus or to cause them to flee enmasse. The militants did not succeed in their scheme. They decided then, it was learnt, to kill Kashmiri Hindus indiscriminately. They believed that the native Hindus were an obstacle in their way of attaining "Independence" and establishing "Nizam-e-Mustaffa" in Kashmir. Independence of Kashmir was, in the view of many militants a prelude to merge Kashmir with Pakistan.

Making Hindus their indiscriminate targets was a clear indication that the militants wanted Kashmir to be an Islamic state bereft of Hindus and Hindu culture. The various outfits of militants, therefore, observed no discrimination or distinction between a known or an unknown Hindu , between those on the hit list and those not on the hit list and between a male and a female . All those Hindus who came across the militants or were otherwise on their hit list, met a very sad fate and were dastardly murdered. A programme of large scale killing of Hindus, appeared to be there, not simple killing but brutal, in order to create horror and awe, unheard of in the civilised world. Many are the instances of kidnapping and then causing a tortuous death. In the few cases, the captives were miraculously let off by the militants but only after inflicting tremendous torture and agony. No reason or explanation for all those brutal killings were attributed except that the helpless victims were charged or treated as "Mukhabir" (Informer) mostly a false allegation but an ostensible pretext to kill . It isthe same as to give a dog bad name and kill him. The word "Mukhabir",therefore, got tremendous currency in Kashmir and has become a dreaded watch word. This all was being done to harass the Hindus and make them to leave Kashmir. Fate of many of the kidnapped persons, like Som Nath Tikku of Shahpur, Ganderbal is not known till this day and are believed to have been done to death. Tikku was kidnapped on February 28,1990. As already said, indis-criminate and brutal killing of Hindus was made by the various militant outfits.

A scholarly teacher and an intellectual, poet and writer, Sarwanad Koul "Premi" of District Anantnag, was also not spared by the militants who included Afghan Mujahideen. It was again a shock given to the Hindu community. He was taken out of his house in the village alongwith his son, Prior to this, however his library and manuscripts were plundered and destroyed. While doing so one of the militants, shouted in surprise, "Masha Allah, yeh to Qurani-Karim hai"(God willing this is holy book of Quran!) This militant was believed to be an Afghan Mujahid. Both, father and son were taken away from their place on April 30, 1990, and then killed brutally. Their eyes were gouged out, then they were barbariously maimed, and finally crucified. Premi was also inflicted an iron nail on his forehead where he used to put his "tilak". Premi had translated Ramayana in Kashmiri and was working on translation of Mahabharatha in Kashmiri. These manuscripts are reported to have been destroyed by the militants. Boasting of his cordial relations with the Muslims, Premi had refused to accept the suggestion to migrate from Kashmir. "I have not done any harm to anybody. Why should then anybody do me harm?". Premi said adding, "I am a Kashmiri and why should I leave Kashmir. I will remain and live here", he rebuffed his well wishers desiring him to leave Kashmir. But for being a Hindu he and his son had to loose their lives under shocking circumstances.

P.N. Handoo, Assistant Director Information was fired upon from point blank range on March 1, 1990 while he was in his government conveyance awaiting return of his driver. B K Ganjoo, a young junior Engineer in Telecommunication Department Srinagar, informed his officers that the militants had laid a trap outside his house and requested for immediate sending of security vehicle to evacuate and save him. It was taken lightly. The militants after a while broke open a window in the ground floor of his house and made forcible entry and searched for him. His wife told them that he was not there. He had concealed himself in the empty petrol drum lying in the third storey of his house. But the other militants watching him from his neighbour's house at Kanikadal, Srinagar, informed their co-terrorists about his concealment in the drum. His wife cried for help to her Muslim neighbours who had not allowed them to shift earlier and had stayed back on their assurance and responsibility. But none came forward to speak a word. The militants shot him dead in the drum itself. His wife beating her breast begged them to kill her too, alongwith her two small children. "Somebody must be there to bemoan his death", thundered the cruel killers. The terrorists wanted to collapse the Indian communication system and purge it of loyal employees. As such, started killing of Hindu employees in the telecommunication department.

Ashok Kumar Bazaz of Chattabal, Srinagar, in his early forties was a promising enterprenuer in carpet business. He went to his shop at about 10 A.M. on March 26, 1990, situated at nearby place Guzerbal. He was lifted and abducted from there in a gypsy and taken by the militants to an unknown place. He was later found murdered. The victim has left behind his widow Usha Bazaz in late thirties and seven minor daughters, eldest being Rosy aged 17 years, studying in TDC. They have no male child. It was a heart rending scene when I interviewed Usha Bazaz in presence of her daughters in a small dungeon like one room flat in Jammu, accommodating eight helpless persons. When I asked about the death of her husband, tears rolled down the cheeks of the frail lady like an unending chain of white pearls stored in her eyes, sunken and sullen. Her daughters looked aghast like lifeless statues, whose smile was snatched by the cruel militants.

The militants, pursuing a calculated communal policy, were killing the Kashmiri Hindus from another angle also. They killed the government officers belonging to Hindu community to purge the various departments, of them and clear the deck leaving the field open for the Muslims. They killed Hindu businessmen in order to prevent the Hindus from competing the Muslims in business, thus enlarging their trade and business prospects and perpetuating their grip over it. The attack on Hindu community in Kashmir was, therefore, multi-purpose as well as multipronged. It simply aimed at annihilating them.

Bansi Lal Sapru of Ghulab Bagh, Kashmir was a political worker and a businessman. On April 24, 1990, at about 7 P.M., three youngmen came to his house and asked him to show them the orchard that he intended to sell. Least doubting their bonafides, he led them to his land nearby. They turned out to be the militants and were well equipped with arms, and took out surprisingly their covered and concealed gun and the pistols. Bansilal was taken aback and tried to resist with empty hands but was fired at several bullets, thus killing him on the spot. It was seen from a distance by his little son who was stealthily following them and ran back crying that his father was killed. Bansilal Sapru had aligned for long with our Party. He was a robust and brave young political worker. Such type of instances amount to betrayal of trust and have shattered confidence of the Hindus.

Ashok Kumar Koul of Kharbrati, Tehsil Kulgam was the only son of his father, Bhaskar Nath Koul, who had, other than him, all daughters. He had gone to his land nearby, but was kidnapped therefrom on May 3, 1990. This faultless youngman had pleaded for mercy with folded hands, after having committed tortures on him. But the militants did not relent and shot him dead in the same pose with folded hands.

Prof K L Ganjoo of Sopore was on the teaching staff of the Government Agriculture College Wadora, Sopore. His wife, Prana Chatta, was a Lecturer at Government Higher Secondary School, Sopore. Prof. Ganjoo had gone to Kathmandu and returned Sopore in March 1990. Husband and wife were separately kidnapped from their home on May 2, 1990. After relishing the brutalities committed on him, Prof . Ganjoo was reportedly told by the militants finally to walk in the river Jehlum without looking back. He did walk into the river and turned back when he feared to drown. The merciless militants, watching him from the river bank enjoyed his helplessness. They had already put him to tremendous torture. They then fired on him volleys of bullets and killed him there and then. His body was found on May 6, in the river Jehlum. His wife Prana Chatta, according to a source, was gang raped and then some parts of her body were brutally amputated. Her body was not handed over to her relatives by the police. They were, however, informed by the police that she was killed, the sister of the victim told me. After number of tortures committed on the person of Prana Chatta, her body was not perhaps deemed worth handing over to her relatives.

A young school teacher, Chaman Lal Tikku of village Shahpur, Ganderbal Kashmir fell to the bullets of his assassins on May 25, 1990. Five armed militants made forcible entry into his house at about 7.45 P.M. on the fateful day. At entrance of the house, two young children, living in the vicious atmosphere as they were, asked them in choked voice whom they wanted to meet. "Recite Kalima", the militants frowned upon the trembling children, who could not read "Kalima" as they did not know what it was. But they sensed danger. The other terrified inmates, however, could understand what it was all about? They might be killed simply for being non Muslims. Without pausing, the militants opened fire indiscriminately inside the house. "*You have not yet run away from here*" shouted one of the ferocious militants. Everyone moved helter skelter in the house to save himself or herself. "*I am hit by the bullets*" cried Chaman Lal to his father in anguish and he fell down. The hounds in the human form were satiated and left the house. "*Save me father.* " the innocent teacher shrieked and added, "*Take me to the Hospital*" The others harassed or injured, were all helpless to save him. What transport arrangements could be made from a village to the Hospital in the city and how could he be carried to the Hospital from the village in the explosive atmosphere, as the entire area was inhabited by the Muslims overwhelmingly and by the Hindus sparingly. Crying and bewailing, the household members then gathered round the young man in his twenties, who was struggling for life and lifted him to take to Hospital. No one else was there to console them, nor to share their grief. By the time they reached the Hospital, Chaman Lal had breathed his last in despair.

When I went to interview his parents, pall of gloom was spread in the government flat at Jammu, where about a dozen of his folks were eking out their dejected existence. Janki Nath Tikku, the depressed father of the victim refused to say anything. The inmates protested and condemned the government, particularly the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. "*Do not scratch further our fresh wounds*", his mournful father said and continued, "*He was my the only son among my five young daughters*", and a stream of tears flowed from his eyes. He sobbed and went into semi unconscious state. The little sisters of the deceased wailed and cried: "*who can give us back our innocent brother, alas we are ruined!*". They couldn't stop weeping "*We are forlorn, no body bothers for us. What is our sin that we are punished for?*" I could see their faces as if washed with tears and heard only sobs and screams. Seema, the young wife of the victim, also injured in the firing, was recovering from the bullet injuries but not from the shock of the colossal tragedy. It was Chaman Lal's uncle who mustered some courage to narrate me the facts of the gruesome tragedy while persuading others to keep heart. Usha, the teenaged sister of the victim was inclined to take up a government job if she got one to feed the dependent and hungry mouths in forced exile as the family had left all the valuables and income of orchards behind.

Junior Engineer, Virender Bhat, had come from Shopian, his place of posting, to his home village Nagam to spend weekend with his mother. No sooner did he reach his house than he was called out on a false plea to meet an official and was taken to the roadside. One of the three militants surprised him there and took out a pistol to fire on him from point blank range. This well built youth in his twenties, grappled with and over powered him. The other militants came forward and shot him. Bhat was injured and fell down, bleeding profusely. The nearby shopkeeper and some other neighbours watched this helplessly. How could these Muslims go against the wishes of the militants? The victim's request to them for some medical aid as such, could not be met even by his known ones in the vicinity. His lone mother suspected some foul play and reached the spot of occurrence. He asked his mother to take him to the Hospital. She begged everyone to help her carry him to the Hospital, but no body came forward nor even to console her. She also begged the transporters and Bus drivers and other men whose vehicles passed through this road but no one acceeded to her implorations.

She beat her breast, struck her head, the agony of a mother for her son could not be realised by others. "Mother, Mother! I will be saved if I am carried to Hospital", voiced her son. But what could a helpless widowed mother do! Her heart was bleeding, her eyes were weeping and she tried to lift her son and carry him on her back till some merciful heart might come to lend her a helping hand. She tried her best to lift him. But as her son was stout she failed to lift him. As much time passed his blood drained out from his body. A Muslim youngman, moved by her plight could no longer resist the last compassionate appeal of a broken mother, brought his motor bicycle to carry the victim to the Hospital. But it was too late and the innocent son of a shrieking mother expired. His mother's world was engulfed with perpetual darkness, gloom and pain. How the mothers world over, would react to the parting of their innocent and injured sons, victimised in the world of bruised humanity and how the sons assailed barbarously would feel while passing away, under the similar shocking circumstances?

Jagan Nath Sapru, a noted social activist in Srinagar, was kidnapped, tortured and then hanged. Deemed dead, he was thrown into a gutter. Some time thereafter, he revived and regained consciousness. He was removed to a Hospital in Srinagar and shifted to Jammu immediately as victims of militancy had no security and safety in the government Hospitals and the Doctors failed to save such injured who died or were again attacked and killed in the Hospital, although some of them, were hoped to survive. Jogindar Malhotra was called out from his house on a pretext and whisked away in a gypsy. Next day his body was found strangulated near Cement Bridge, Srinagar. Testicles and other parts of his body were dotted with cigrette burns. His body also bore various stab injuries. He appeared to have been somuch tortured and his body so much mutilated that it was not easy to recognize.

It was in the night at about IAM when the door of a house at Shlipora, Badgam was knocked by the armed militants. The inmates had not migrated. The door opened a little and from behind the trembling house lady peeped and asked them what they wanted. "We have lost the route, ask your son to show us way. 1) "But which way in the night", reply came in a cheked voice from mother of KanhyaLal, who wanted to avoid them. "He is in sleep", she added. The only son of the mother thought it better to entreet them than to among expose the mother to danger. "What work have you got in the dead of night," a polite and subdued voice of the son came from the behind while approaching the door. The militants forcibly stepped in, caught hold of Kanhya Lal and dragged him out and took alongwith.

The helpless mother and her daughter-in-law spent the whole night weeping and wailing, awaiting his arrival. But Kanhya Lal did not return. In the morning his body was found on the road side, bruised, cloth inserted into his mouth and killed.

Balji Tutoo, S.D.O. at Badgam was killed in his house at Sheshyar, Srinagar when four armed militants came to attack the family in July, 1990. One armed militant entered the house and the victims younger brother Nanaji Tutoo, caught and fought with him. He over powered the militant and snatched his weapon. This militant cried for help from other co-militants. Nanaji was trying to handle the weapon, when the other militants broke open the window of their ground floor and shot at Balji. He went to save his brother and left the militant who ran away. The injured was removed to the Hospital who expressed to his wife that he hoped to survive and they all should leave for Jammu the next day. He however, died in the Hospital. The other members of the family were asked by Muslim neighbours to go out of Kashmir immediately for their safety. I interviewed a relation of the victim and asked about treatment of the doctors meted out in the Hospital.The impression gathered was that the injured was killed for want of treatment, as the policy in the Hospitals was that people injured by the militants' bullet should not be treated and saved.

About half a dozen militants forcibly entered the house of one Ganjoos at Banamohalla, Srinagar on June 17, 1990 in the broad day light at about 4 P.M. They indiscriminately fired at the inmates, killing Jawahir Lal Ganjoo and also his sister and brother -in-Law Badri Nath Koul on the spot and leaving the rest injured. The wife of Jawahir Lal was also injured butdied in Hospital (SKMI)on June 22, 1990. Their young daughter Nancy Ganjoo survived the injuries as also Ashok Koul, the young son of Badri Nath Koul, who was Assistant Registrar Co-operative. The two families were brutally ruined and crushed.

The surviving adult male member of the house, P.N. Ganjoo shuddered when I asked him about this tragic episode. "At the sight of sudden shower of bullets, none could think what and why it was", he said and continued, "As if we were engulfed by dark clouds under terrific horror and the cloudburst was taking our lives". He further expressed that they had decided not to leave Kashmir and stay there "But we had to pay from our nose for this and becauseof the tragedy we were compelled to leave Kashmir without any fault of ours," he said while suppressing his emotions. Some militants broke into the house of D.S.P. (C.I.B) Badri Nath Wattal, retired long back, at Rainawari, Srinagar. They derived pleasure by giving him severe thrashing. Then enjoyed his agony by breaking and amputating his legs. Finally, he was shot dead.

Rakaish of Vikas Bakery Karan Nagar, Srinagar had cordial relations with some militants and was at times supporting them financially. He was asked by the militants to stay back in Srinagar on their guarantee without any fear or threat. So he did. A militant came to his shop one day and asked for some bakery. The moment he bowed to pick up the bakery, the militant fired at point blank range and killed him.

Puneet Sawhney, the only son of a business magnate in Kashmir, Raj Sawhney, was killed by the militants in his office of Krishna Flour Mills, Srinagar, only a few months after his wedding in Delhi. He had come back after enjoying honeymoon in Switzerland. Despite paying sums of money to the militants, the young Sawhney was also not spared by them. Virendar Suri of Mandirbagh, Srinagar was called out of his house and engaged for a while in some talk at his entrance gate. After that, when he was about to step back into his house, he was fired shots from behind and injured. He was taken to the Hospital but the doctors did not attend on him perhaps under the usual policy and threat of militants , which required even to kill such victims by administering poisonous injections. And he died there. His wifeanswered some questions of press persons in Delhi. A newspaper quoted her and published news about it. Some days later, uncle of Suri, living separately, was also assassinated by the militants in Srinagar and this clipping of the newspaper was tied to his body. Virendar Suri, had decided not to leave Srinagar and only a day prior to his murder, he had expressed that the Hindus were unnecessarily leaving Kashmir. The militants gave him this sad, mournful and tragic reply.

Shankar Nath Tikku left his wife and young daughters at Jammu and himself went back to his place after some time. He reached his village Wadwan, Tehsil Badgam, Kashmir on.August 18,1990. He had, sister also married in the same village who was still there. As soon as he reached his residence, he was kidnapped by the militants of his own village. He was killed and found hanging by a tree at village Wahpora on the next day. When I interviewed his widow and young daughters, I found these forlorn daughters of the Vale in wail. Their stream of tears explained their plight more eloquently than their tongue prodded with pain. They had nothing to fall back upon. Sweety, one of the unmarried daughters of the victim possessed a Diploma in handicrafts. But she was not getting any job. Jagar Nath Shawl, Patwari, and his relative Zindalal, both residents of Bhagatpora, Tehsil Handwara were abducted by the militants, on October 6, 1990. Both were later on found hanged and killed.

Dr Shuban Kishan Koul and Rajinder Koul were two young cousins living alongwith their spouses at Rehbaba Sahib Srinagar, when both the young couples were mercilessly killed by the militants in the month of October 1990. Their Muslim neighbours had given them full assurance of safety and even some of the militants had also guaranteed protection. Dr Koul was helpful to their kitty, all and would administer treatment even at odd hours and also contributed to them money out of his own earnings. The barbaric assassination of both the young couples, showed scant regardof the militants for the promise of safety and protection of the slain coup made by the Mohallawalas. Some militants entered their premises and showered bullets on them. The young frightened wife opened her mouth and said "hai" on seeing bullets being pumped on her husband, one shot was forthwith fired at her mouth, followed by volley of bullets that silenced her there and then. Both the young innocent and gentle couples were assassinated in their own house, within minutes for no faults of theirs except, for the fact that, they were Hindus. According to a confidential report based on the opinion of a Sikh Doctor, Rajindar Koul had fair chances to survive when he was brought to the SMHS Hospital. He simply died forwant of treatment as was the policy in the Hospital. This is how those injured by militants could not be saved in the Hospitals also. This gruesome killing, however, evinced resentment among the Muslims also and caused a tremor in the vicinity. Many Muslims protested, asking why the couples were then detained and not allowed to go out, if the promise for their safety was not an abiding one.

The wife of a BSF Inspector posted at Central Jail Srinagar came out of the Jail premises after visiting her husband there. This highly educated and innocent lady was caught hold of, by the militants there and then and was kidnapped, gang raped and tortured for a couple of days. Her breast was cut, portion below torn and thus killed brutally and thrown on the road side.

A.K. Raina, Deputy Director Food & Supplies, Srinagar was in his office Chamber, when armed militants openly entered and shot him dead in the office itself on March 20, 1990. Out of the hundreds of employees and complaining visitors present in the office complex, no body touched the assassins.

Bansilal Misri, a young boy, was just playing with his brother at Pirbagh Srinagar when the militants laid a trap and shot him dead on March 24, 1990. While proceeding to his office by a car, alongwith his security guard, the militants dragged H.L. Khera, General Manager HMT, Srinagar, out of his car in presence of his security guard on April 6, 1990 and kidnapped him. It was the day when Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University, Mushir ul Haq alongwith his Dy. Registrar Abdul Gani was also kidnapped. Khera was like others, tortured for a couple of days and finally shot dead on March 24, 1990. Haq and Gain also were agonised for a a coupleof days and then killed brutally.

Ms. Sarla Bhat was working as a Nurse at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences Soura, Srinagar. She was in know of the involvement of doctors with militants. She also was knowing as to how the victims of militancy were killed and how the Hospital had become a centre of militants. She did not, however, disclose any secret to anybody but tried to save and serve everyone. Even then she was not spared and was ruthlessly killed by the militants on April 10, 1990, apprehending that she might disclose their secrets some day.

Sudhir Kumar Kotru, a young boy of Rainawari, Srinagar was asked by his mother to take his meals, when he went out of the house alongwith a Muslim friend. "I will be coming just now", he replied to his mother. But he was shot dead on April 23, 1990 and never returned to his home to take meals.

Two orphan and unmarried brothers of Habba Kadal Srinagar were brutally killed by the militants on different dates. One brother known as Nanha, was killed at Batamaloo, Srinagar which frightened the other. They had stayed back at their peril. The surviving brother, a newspaper hawker, had saving of rupees nineteen thousand which amount was collected and deposited by him on trust over a period, with a Muslim milkman, his neighbour. Rendered jobless and starving, he demanded the money back from this milkman which the latter avoided.

Some militants meanwhile, caught hold of him near his Mohalla Purshyar and gave him servere beating. One of the militants struck a piece of fuel wood forcibly on his nose and he bled profusely. His heart beatings became fast and he felt thirsty. He cried with pain, craved for mercy and begged for water, shrieking "traish" "traish" (drinking water). The assailants were unmoved and enjoyed his anguish. No body gave him even a drop of water to drink. He then stretched his both hands and joined together the palms to collect blood gushing out from his nose and drank his own blood for water. The militants then dragged him in that condition to a migrant's courtyard in the nearby vicinity of Kanikadal and fixed bombs on his person. He was fired upon thereafter, bombs exploded and his body tore into pieces and the splinter limbs blew up in the air, which the militants rejoiced as fun and frolic. This is the punishment for the "sin" of being a Hindu in Kashmir.

A source close to the security forces disclosed that on one single day as many as 16 Hindus were found hanging on various trees and thus killed in different areas of Lolab.

The unabated violence and torture done to the Hindus in Kashmir Valley continued from the outset. The manner and method of killing of the innocent persons is as gruesome and atrocious as it is unparalleled and condemnable. A young Hindu teacher was betrayed, raped and finally sliced into two pieces on the blade of a Bandsaw machine. I had sent a letter dated July 11, 1990 to the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh. The letter inter-alia reads:

> *"The Hindus still left in the Valley stand extremely harassed and exposed to all dangers. And why they should not be? Not a single day passes when some of them are not brutally tortured, maimed, disfigured and then killed. It is not, therefore, a question of killing Hindus simply only but the manner and method of their killing is all the more gruesome, barbaric and alarming as it is woeful and shameful. How heart rending is the report that a Hindu girl (named perhaps Girja Kumari) kidnapped by the*

terrorists in Trehgam area(Kupwara) was assaulted and tortured for a couple of days, then finally taken to a bandsaw machine......and sawn like wood, dissecting her alive into two parts right from her private parts to the head. Is such an instance of brutality available elesewhere in the world?.......

The barbaric killings of Mrs. Roopawati and her young daughter Babli (Pulwama District) by the terrorists, who were tortured, maimed and then left slain, constitute only a few horrifying instances in the long list of such brutal killings of the loyal citizens of the land. The two Hindu youths kidnapped from Handwara area, were killed like so many others, by inches. The arm of one of these captives was amputated and all his blood drained out and was preserved so that it could be used for blood transfusion to an injured terrorist. Similarly was killed the other captive: his eyes were gouged out and then all blood extracted from his body. Another woeful tale of similar nature is that of Chaman Lal Koul, who was working as Accounts Officer, Government Spinning Mills Nowshehra, Srinagar and his cousin Jawahir Lal Koul (both from Chattabal, Srinagar). They were kidnapped, tortured and all blood extracted from their bodies thus killed and thrown on the road side".

Instances of peeling off skin or applying hot iron press on the face and other parts of the victims' bodies before their killing have also been reported. Yet another dastered killing in the long list of unfortunate and innocent Hindus in Kashmir, is that of Dwarika Nath Choudhry , Manager Pre-Cast Cement factory Wuyan, Choudhry had stayed back in Kashmir as he did not choose to migrate. He was caught by hair and dragged out from his office lavatory by three armed militants on August 8, 1990. Suhail, Secretary J & K Minerals Ltd. and other two officers, Amir Ahamed and Abdul Majid Bhat were in his office when he was kidnapped by the militants at about 2.45 P.M. G. A. Zargar, Senior Draughtsman and Abdul Ahad Sofi, Crane Operator, however, requested the militants that Choudhry was innocent and prayed for mercy to set him free."He is a good man and gentle par excellence. Kindly do not take him", pleaded one of them. But the militants did not relent and whisked away Choudhry in Taxi No JKT 201. He was taken to village Ladou and subjected to inhuman tortures. His hand was broken mercilessly to cause him pain and anguish and his tongue was cut so as to make him unable to cry. A hot iron press was moved on the skin of his face and chest burning these parts of his body ruthlessly. His eyes were gouged out to see how he would move and what he would do. After enjoying this all , Choudhry was killed and his body thrown at Lethapora. Has a similar thing happened anywhere, in any savage part of the world? If not, why then the innocent Hindus in Kashmir have been singled out for this tragic and barbaric treatment unheard of, in the world? Why the Indian people shut their eyes to this traumatic living and barbarious killings of their Hindus in Kashmir? Are not they part and parcel of Indian nation? How the peoples of the world bypass or connive at it?Does not this afflicted, aggrieved and suffering Kashmiri Hindu community form part of the human society? Why then the butchery of innocent and defenceless Kashmiri Hindus is countenanced without any qualms of conscience? A Kashmiri "Hangul"(Stag) is protected under the Act but the Hindus of Kashmir have not been protected and saved under any human code and ethics. Where has the message of mercy of God's son Christ gone? What happened to the Prophet Mahammad's teachings of tolerance? What has gone wrong with the preaching of Lord Rama's humility and humanity? Why has Lord Budha's message of peace and non-violence been ignored? Would the miserable plight of Hindus of Kashmir be viewed in the light of all these messages?

I had further written to the Prime Minister about the killings in Kashmir and the fate the Hindus have been facing there:

> *"The instances of kidnapping, maiming and tortuous killing of Hindus in Kashmir are galore and the number of victims goes to hundreds which is the highest human toll in Kashmir, at least in terms of the proportion of the population.......Not a tear is shed anywhere on such lamentable and breath taking indiscriminate killings of faultless and loyal Hindus which by far, constitute a big black scar on the face of the humanity, the world over. The National Front government cannot escape from its responsibility for the colossal tragedy of such a wide magnitude that has befallen the Kashmiri Pandit community in Kashmir which has hardly any parallel...*
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> *The Kashmiri Pandit community might have perhaps met a better fate and deal than the current one, had they lived in Pakistan. Even the Jews have not suffered in Germany under Nazi regime, the said type of brutal killings, harassment and torture. Both, the State as well as the Central government have all along practised the policy of apartheid against the Hindus of Kashmir. The National Front government is no exception".*[248]

I was worried on account of nationalist and pro-India Muslims also who were also bound to suffer. I, therefore, wrote to the Prime Minister:

> *"I am equally worried on account of committed pro India Muslims living in Kashmir, whatever their party affiliations. Currently their condition is no better than the Hindus in Kashmir. They are also being killed and are living in their hide outs. They have also lost faith in the capacity of the Government to protect them. They curse the soft peddling policy of*

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248. The author s letter from Jammu, dated July, 11, 1990 addressed to the Prime Minister of National Front Government Mr. V.P. Singh was despatched to many other Ministers as well as to Rashtrapati, Chairman Rajya Sabha and Speaker Lok Sabha.

government of India, adopted in crushing the militancy. They are also sufferers though comprising a small section only, and , need to be rescued and saved. [249]

Mir Mustafa, an independent MLA was kidnapped by the militants and killed. He was found hanged to death. Abdul Satter Ranjoor, Secretary Communist Party of India, Kashmir Council, was also shot dead by the militants. A former Minister, Abdul Jabar was also killed by them. Former party legislators Peer Mohammad Shafi and some others were also done to death by the militants.

Moulvi Farooq was killed by the militants at his new residence. Three gunmen entered his room and fired volley of bullets killing him on the spot. Moulvi Farooq had apprehended some foul play at the hands of the militants. He wanted to get himself arrested by the government and placed in confinement at Kud Special Jail, which was not, acceptable to the Government, which had arranged forhim to be provided adequate security. It was not, however, accepted by Moulvi Farooq. He wanted to become a hero on the one hand by being arrested, and on the other, he wanted to save his person from physical violence of the militants that was likely to be inflicted on him. The Moulvi had sent the Government messages also in this connection, but without arriving at any concrete understanding, all that he wished to be done was not agreed to by theHome Ministry. The fundamentalist militant outfits, therefore, finished Moulvi Farooq on May 21, 1990. The followers of Moulvi Farooq (Bakras) are still sore about the mischief played by the militants in killing Moulvi Farooq purposely by a section of them. Disturbances ensued, his killing was sought to be avenged by "Bakras", but for the calculated direction given to it by causing civilian police clashes, resulting in dozens of casualties and thereby escaping themselves the wrath of Bakras which they still nourish.

The militants did not spare Moulana Mohamad Syed Masoodi also. The 88 year old Maulana was ailing for quite some time and was confined to bed at his Ganderbal residence. The militants entered his room and shot him dead in this condition there and then on December 13, 1990. It was again the height of barbarism. A great Islamic scholar, Maulana Masoodi had dedicated his whole life to the service of Kashmir and its people. Soft spoken Maulana was a fine gentleman, highly cultured and erudite. What a reward he was given at the fag end of his life by the militants, brings shame to all Kashmiris.

Terrorism penetrated in the police force also in a large scale, so much so that their Hindu colleagues were in many cases either killed by their Muslim colleagues or tortured and done to death with their connivance or independently on their own, by the militants. I cite here a few examples:

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249. The author's letter from Jammu, dated July, 11, 1990 addressed to the Prime Minister of National Front Government, Mr. V.P. Singh was despatched to many other Ministers as well as to Rashtrapati, Chairman Rajya Sabha and Speaker Lok Sabha.

C.L. Shalla, Inspector Kashmir Policewas on duty in Kupwara district. He was one night, called out of his room by his own Police personnel, taken out of the premises and killed allegedly by them. After committing this betrayal of trust and dastardly act, the slain and mutilated body of Shalla was thrown on roadside. What was more disgraceful and tragic about it, was that his own Police personnel refused to identify his dead body?

Jagar Nath, Head Constable Anantnag, was on patrol duty at Khanabal alongwith three Muslim Constables. Two Militants came and handed over a letter to one of the Police Constables asking all the three Muslim Constables to go away from the spot immediately and leave the Head Constable alone. The three constables without disclosing the reality to the Head Constable Jagar Nath, under one pretext or the other, left him one by one. The moment he was there all alone, the militants came hurriedly and shot him dead, firing from point blank range and ran away.

Another Head Constable of District Anantnag, named Dwarika Nath, was taking his meals in the night at his residence at village Mahind, when the militants broke into his house and killed him there and then.

Another Head Constable Tej Krishan, was singled out and kidnapped from among the other three of Muslim Police Constables at the gateof Police lines Khanabal. He was interrogated by the Militants for two days. Among other tortures done to his person, the skin of his hip's on either side was burnt by cigarette bits in such a manner so as to read JKLF. After two days, he was taken to Brakapora bridge (in between Anantnag and Achabal) to hang him there publicly. While he was about to be hanged on the bridge, he managed to jump into the river. At the same time, to his good luck, CRPF truck came by that side, militants ran away and the CRP men rescued bruised Tej Krishen, handed him over to Achabal Police Chowki. They sent him under guard to Udhampur.

Prem Nath, ASI Kuil, II Officer Police Station Dooru, was dragged out from the Police Station in presence of all other Muslim Police personnel in the "Thana". He was brutally killed under the "protective" nose of the Police Station and his body was sliced into pieces.

Under these circumstances, when they were singled out for brutal killings in presence of their Muslim colleagues, the Hindu Police personnel took their families alongwith and went to Jammu, partly as protest and partly to save their families. They had to suffer great agony at Jammu, as the government, unlike other employees, neither paid them any salary nor any cash relief. The Government asked them to go back, which they were willing to, and were prepared to serve their place of birth, although they had lost faith in the fairness and efficacy of the Government. They, however, put forth their grievances and wanted the government to remove them, before they returned the Valley. Some of these demands and grievances were absolutely genuine but the Government remained adamant on their return before removing their grievances. One Avtar Krishan Constable, of Roham (Baramulla), felt helpless on unfair treatment and adamant attitude of the Government. He abandoned migrants' Jehri camp (Jammu) and went back to Kashmir as a test case. The young, daring and stout Avtar Krishan was killed within days after he had returned Kashmir in August. 1990. Even then the other Hindu Police personnel of Kashmir went back and are there:

The above was a brief mention of the game indulged in, by the militants who had "delightful" shootings and the tortuous killings which they "enjoyed" in the "human sanctuary" of the Valley of Kashmir. They hounded ruthlessly and easily an irresistibleand unshielded, but a rare and dying human species in this sanctuary, thy name is Kashmiri Pandit, a helpless Hindu, yet struggling with fortitude and ingenuity for their survival and protection of national interests. It was something about some specimens who belonged to this fine but tormented race of humanity and now something be told about the few wounded and afflicted one's who were haunted and hunted in the sanctuary, nevertheless survived. Let us, share their experience based on my interviews with them:-

Mohan Lal Thusoo, a resident of village Dhanihama, Tehsil Ganderbal, Kashmir has been a life long chemist and a medical practitioner. He had his clinic there and was among the few Hindus who were residents of this village. On May 5, 1990, a youth entered his clinic at about 5 P.M. and expressed that he wanted some medicines. Another youth did not enter and preferred to remain outside. The one inside meanwhile, took out his pistol and fired three shots on him. Thousoo fell down, the militant thought he was dead and left and was joined by the other militant. Thusoo was immediately removed to the city for medical treatment.. One fire shot he had received in his hand, second shot hit his arm and the third shot was received by him in the chest, which could have proved fatal for him. Luckily a slight missing of the target saved him. He wondered as to why the militants came to kill him when he had been all along doing a great work by serving the ailing and the sick persons without any communal considerations. He served the Muslims more, he stressed. He bore no animosity with any body nor had he to do anything with the politics. Even then, he was not spared, he puzzled.

Radha Krishana Razdan, a resident of Bagh-i-Sunder, Chattabal, Srinagar, was an Executive Engineer with the Corps. SMC, Srinagar. He has undergone a more woeful and sad experience. He was abducted from his residence at gun point on July 4, 1990 at about 8.30 P.M. He was taken to an unknown place on Shah Cinema side while his eyes were closed enroute. He was detained for the night and his investigation was conducted by 4,5 militants. He was asked by his captors to tell them the names of the CID's in his Mohalla. He sincerely told them that he had nothing to do with the intelligence people nor he knew anything about them. They might have thought that he had not left Kashmir and had stayed back perhaps for spying purposes. There was no such thing and the apprehension, if any, was absolutely unfounded and false. Radha Krishnan could not tell them anything except the truth, but they did not agree, or they purposely refused to agree. They perhaps wanted simply to enjoy his helplessness. They gave him severe beating for the whole night, beat him with iron hunters and rods. As a result of which his whole body was injured and his four teeth broken. Flesh of his body at some places was mercilessly peeled off. He was shocked to recollect the events and said that all conceivable methods of torture were applied to him, so much so he was hanged also, but before he could finally die, he was allowed to survive for a few hours more to undergo further torture in a different way. Hewas applied "near death" formulla to prolong his agony and torture and to kill him finally after a protracted ordeal and wrench. He expressed that he had lost all hope of survival and he felt that the death devils were moving every moment around him, killing him by inches.

On July 5, 1990 in the morning at about 4.30, Radha Krishan was taken to Weir (Barrage over Jehlum river). His throat was slightly slitted with a butcher's knife, in a manner to make "Hallal" killing so as to exhaust his whole blood. Thereafter, Radha Krishan was thrown on the ground near the Weir to die and the militants left. He, however, kept his senses intact and tried to stop the blood gushing out of his body. Within minutes time a Muslim gentleman passed through and he requested him to save him. The former came closer to the latter and asked his name, "Radha Krishan" he replied politely and looking at him helplessly, craving for mercy. On hearing his name, this middle aged Muslim frowned upon him and instead of helping, he dragged him by legs and threw him into river Jehlum near the Weir only to be fished out later as dead. He was, however, still in senses and tried to keep his mouth above the water level in his attempt to save himself from drowning. "*And this was blessing in disguise for me*", said Radha Krishan Razdan and added, "*Blood coagulated there due to running water and I struggled to come up on the ground in which I succeeded*". He apprehended that he would be again killed there when the traffic started. He, therefore, planned to reach the CRPF beat (Bunker) , which was nearby. He mustered courage, crawled and walked and reached near the CRPF beat. He requested them to save him and disclosed his identity. He then fell unconscious and was removed by them to the State Hospital . He showed me his body, full of bruises and cuts and scars. To his good luck, Sikh Doctors were on duty then at the State Hospital who whole heartedly attended on him. But the militants came there and before any mischief was done by them, Radha Krishnan was removed to the B & F (military) Hospital. where the Army Doctors struggled hard and succeeded in saving him.

Ramesh, ayoung boy of Kralayar, Rainawari Srinagar, was kidnapped by the militants. His whereabouts are not known uptil date. A Hindu of the same locality of Rainawari (who wants to remain anonymous) expressed shock over the kidnapping of that innocent and meek boy, in presenceof an acquaintance Mohi-ud-Din nicknamed as Gulli, also of the same locality. This Hindu, a government employee had helped this Muslim family after the death of Gulli's father, long back in getting his sister employed in order to make their two ends meet.

Gulli, however, didnot tolerate his remarks, though soft about the captives, which obviously indicated disapproval of the militants action. On or around 24th May, 1990, Gulli came to the house of this Hindu sympathizer of the kidnapped boy, and told him that the boy was not kidnapped. He further told him that the boy was safe and he had taken a loan from a person who wanted him to execute a receipt therefor. Gulli, asked this man to sign the receipt as witness and bring the boy alongwith. The Hindu gentleman believed his closely known Muslim of the locality and readily accepted his suggestion. It was about 12 O'clock in the noon. Gulli took him to a far away place in Muslim area of Rainawari and conducted him to the courtyard of a house and asked him to wait and he would bring down thesupposedly kidnapped boy. The story was false and instead of the boy, Gulli came down with furious looking two Muslim youths and the supposed witness was pushed inside a room. With two red hot iron rods they mercilessly belaboured thisHindu gentleman. He begged of them to leave him as he was innocent. They tore his trouser and shirt and burnt flesh of his chest at different places by these hot iron rods and also of the legs. He cried with pain and horror but who could help him. He showed me the burn scars which he still sustained. The two youths left the room, bolted it and told Gulli that they would be returning shortly and meanwhile he should keep guard of the captive.

Finding now Gulli alone, the captive tried to appeal him in the name of old acquaintance to invoke his mercy. But Gulli was not moved with his moving appeals. "Allow me to go, I am father of young daughters you know; they will die with shock for me," the helpless Hindu shrieking with pain, told his merciless "guard" in choked voice. "So what, I will marry one," replied Gulli and added, "My cousin will marry another". The captive was shocked, his heart palpitated more. He was now convinced that his brutal end was coming nearer. He felt thirsty, his tongue dried up and begged of his "guard" to give him some water to drink. "Wait, I will pass my urine and you can consume that to quench your thirst," Gulli replied him mercilessly. Under a spell of shock and frustration, the captive tore his apparel further and threw out the whole money that was in his pocket. He lost all hopes and did not know what to do. It was the remaining amount of his saved salary, about a few hundred rupees, currency notes and small coins.

Gulli pounced upon this scattered money and collected it, so that the other youths might not come and snatch the amount. He then himself told his captive to jump from the window of the ground floor, opening on the lane and run away. The terrorised and half dead captive lost no time in jumping and went off from the spot but feared that other people in this area might get hold of him in that condition.

He, therefore, concealed himself in a broken grave of nearby graveyard till 5 P.M. when the curfew had to start. After the curfew was imposed, the movement of the people came to a stop and he came out of the grave and went to his house. Early next morning, he rushed to Jammu with empty hands, the victimised man told me.

Kuldip Kumar Kapur, a resident and shopkeeper of Handwara, chose to stay back in Kashmir and to look after his property. This irritated the militaants who decided to kill him. They came to finish him one day, and fired upon him indiscriminately. His body received six bullet injuries and he fell down unconscious. Militants left, presuming him dead. But the providence willed otherwise. He was removed from the spot immediately and administered medical treatment as hurriedly as possible. He was saved miraculously and survives today.

I had written a letter on march 23, 1990, to Prime Minister V P Singh, expressing my grave concern over the developing situation in Kashmir. The letter inter alia, reads:-

> *"It is shameful that even after 42 years of independence, the natives fellt like strangers andwere unsafe and insecure in their own land. The human species known the world over as "Kashmiri Pandits", who believe in birth control and constitute a very small faction of the society, are languishing day in and day out. Alongwith other Hindus, dozens of their brilliant men and women have been and are being mercilessly killed for no fault of theirs, which amounts to massacre of this small community in comparison to population proportion. There are laws like "Protection of Wild Life Act", to save the dwindling number of animals, but there are no actions to saved this rare human specie".*[250]

The militants, however, unlike others, singled out a whole community of Hindus in Kashmir and meted out hostile, horrible and inhuman treatment to this small community. The members of this community were not killed in a simple manner but slaughtered barbarously as indicated earlier, setting a grim example in the world over. The tortures inflicted on them during the days they remained hostages or captives, when they were killed subsequently, are unheard of. Maiming or slashing particular parts of the body, gouging out eyes, breaking hands and applying hot iron press on the body, striking nails on the forehead peeling off skin at different parts of the body, draining out whole blood from the veins, hanging to death, sawing like wood on a bandsaw machine or enjoying their killing in a spirit of hunting sport by asking the victim to run away, or cross a stream or the river and shooting him from behind thus deriving pleasure from the desperate struggle that the victims made. Instances given above briefly, are only indicative and not

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[250] This registered letter of the author was despatched to the Prime Minister from Delhi. Its copies were sent to many other Ministers.

exhaustive. For a fuller and detailed description a separate book needs to be written. Has all this happened else where in the world? It has not and had it occurred elsewhere in the globe, the world nations would not have lost time in crying a halt to it and strongly condemning the militants responsible therefor, as well as all those who had been connected with militants. The height of it is that whenever the victim of the militancy had a chance of survival and was removed to the Hospital, the doctors were reportedly under restraint and could not administer due and proper treatment to such injured who as a result died in the Hospital. In some cases, the militants visited the Hospitals aand killed the injured there, in case he was alive to receive medical treatment. The militants are all Muslims and this all barbarous and inhuman treatment was meted out mostly to the members of the small Hindu community of Kashmir.

What happened and still is happening to the Hindus in Kashmir, has transgressed all the limits, even of terrorism. On the war front also, where two opposite armies face each other as enemies, their injured are being evacuated, even through Red Cross Society, and put to medical treatment in attempt to nurse and save them. But the members of the Hindu community of Kashmir is not entitled to the right of medical care either, which is a hundred percent literate community now in the world. The illiterate or semi literate militants as most of them are, have become so black hearted and vindictive as to hold the entire community to ransom, by their illegal actions, as the worst and condemned murderers. Such circumstances were created which forced Hindus and even pro-India and nationalist Muslims to go out of the Valley, leaving their property and homes and hearths behind. Further shameful aspect of this collosal tragedy is that even the girls and ladies of Hindu community have been murdered brutally. Who has then been subjected to excesses? The militants and their supporters and sympathisers or the innocent and law abiding members of the Hindu community of Kashmir? It has been a sordid campaign of disinformation about Kashmir that the hard hit and worst suffering Hindu community of Kashmir has been neglected, ignored and discarded and the law breakers and murderers are being euologised, appeased and talked of being victims of police excesses.

Even the killing of large number of security forces unprovokedly, does not seem to be in the mind of such elements at all? An innocent and self respecting community can ill afford to put up with this sad state of affairs any longer. The concern on likely extinction of some species of birds and animals has been shown the world over, for the past many years. To protect them was thought necessary and the governments moved to legislate in this regard.

The State of Jammu & Kashmir has also enacted the protection of wild Life Act to protect "Hangul" (Kashmiri stag), a rare specie of animal in Kashmir under this Act. It also cannot be killed in order to save this specie. But Kashmiri Hindu (bulk of whom is known as Kashmiri Pandit) has been allowed to be slaughtered barbarously and flee.

Kashmiri Hindus have not taken to insurgency, though they have more grievances than any other community may have. According to a rough estimate, about 700 Hindus have been killed in Kashmir Valley. The Kashmiri Hindu is a defenceless and a peace loving. It is the solitary instance in the whole world that its members are killed without any resistance and defence and there is absolutely no retaliation from them and as such, not a single Muslim is injured by them, as against the heavy toll they are paying at the hands of the Muslim militants. It is their cultural upbringing, cradled as they are, in high human values and civilised order. When it comes to the fighting, they will fight nalso with valour and ability.

As already stated that the onslaughts on the religion and culture of the Kashmiri Hindus have been made and they have been even forced to leave the Valley, besides a number of them butchered in Kashmir. This all has not meant any thing for anybody in the world. Kashmir militancy is a crime against humanity and war against civilization. The world knows about Nuremberg trials "*of top Nazis accused of crimes against humanity*".[251] The American Attorney while highlighting the seriousness of the charges against the accused told the Court that the "*plaintiff in this Court is civilisation*".[251]

Inhuman and savage acts of Kashmir militants and their abettors amount to crime against humanity and "civilisation", be deemed complainant against them all.

USA always spoke critically against Afghanistan Government and in favour of Afghan refugees. In Kashmir, it is total annihilation of Hindu community with the active support of alien countries like Pakistan which has been regarded as a trivial matter. While speaking over Afghanistan resolution in United Nations, US Ambassador Herbert Okun said:

> "*.......Even now, as we speak innocent Afghan men, women and children are being indiscriminately slaughtered, simply because they refuse to relinquish what is theirs: their homes, their land, their families, their culture and religion, their way of life*" [252]

Worse than this is the plight of Kashmir Hindus. About 2 lakhs of them have been forced out of the Valley, and are caught in the vortex of penury and misery, every breath they inhale, is life for them and every breath they exhale is death for them. Such is the state that an entire community has been reduced to and the governments that ruled them, have contributed to their oppression and acted worst than alien one. Did not their appalling condition warrant an official statement from White House, Washington, castigating Pakistan for her involvement in origniating and encouraging militancy and killings in Kashmir in general and condemning the excesses committed against the Hindus of Kashmir by the militants in particular? There has been a systematic working, aimed at killing and extinction of this ethnic group. The members of this ethnic community have been wiped out from Kashmir in a planned manner. It amounts to "approaching genocide" of this small Hindu minority which is already deprived of hundreds of its valuable and innocent sons and daughters, butchered as they were, by the militants. How American Ambassador Herbert Okun expressed concern over the Afghan people and how he defined "Genocide" in his aforementioned speech is quoted below:

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[251] *Unesco Sources No. 16 - June, 1990.*

[252] *USIS backgrounder, New Delhi, November 6, 1986.*

> *"Genocide" is a term which means the systematic killing of, or a program of actions intended to destroy a whole national or ethnic group. It is unconscionable that in todays world a situation exists that might justify being characterized as approaching genocide..... We have gathered here to express our collective outrage at the transgressions of basic human rights being perpetrated against the Afghan people"*[253]

Does not the Kashmir "Hindus"fall within the above definition of USA and deserve all the sympathy and support? It was intended to finish the Hindu community in Kashmir which has now lost its moorings as well.

After visiting Kashmir Valley, the Asia Watch Committee, held terrorists guilty of kidnapping and killing civilians and flagrantly violating human rights of the people. In their report issued from Washington, the Committee says about the terrorists:

> *"The militants have flagrantly violated international humanitarian law by killing, kidnapping and assaulting civilians. Asia Watch gathered direct testimony about many such attacks that have taken place since late 1989..................*
>
> *Militant organisations have issued death threats and have assassinated members of the minority Hindu community and Muslims who have not supported their separatist cause. In addition militant groups have killed civil servants and have summarily executed suspected Government informers..................*
>
> *Militant forces have also thrown grenades, bombs and other explosive devices at buses, residences and Government buildings, killing and wounding civilians."*[254]

Kashmir Hindus have suffered the ignobility and humiliation of worst type due to the policy of"apartheid"pursued against them which the world is not in know of.

Original inhabitants of Kashmir, have been wiped out from Kashmir and

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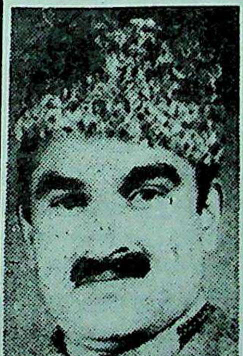
253. *USIS backgrounder, New Delhi, November 6, 1986.*

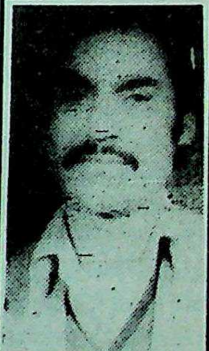
254. *The Hindustan Times, May 6, 1991.*

converted into refugees in their own country, a number of them killed barbariously their innumerable houses set on fireand other properties damaged and looted should accordingly havebeen a matter of concern for the whole world. The tragic aspect is that nowadays governments go by the quantity of the people alone and not by the quality of the people and the kind of outrages and sufferings they undergo. Can the type of brutal killings inflicted on the innocent, peace loving, law abiding and defenceless members of the Kashmir Hindu community, afford to lose sight of? Is it not something more than genocide of this historical community? Did Afghanistan also present such a spectacle of merciless and revengeful killings by the 'other people' of the same place, which the defenceless Hindus of Kashmir faced at the hands of Muslim militants? The problem of Hindus of Kashmir, neglected and oppressed as they are, is multidimensional and bound to impinge on more serious and fundamental issues, within home and outside home, the gravity and intensity of which appear to have neither been visualised or contemplated, nor fringe of it touched or perceived.

Tika Lal Tapiloo



Prem Nath Bhat



Bansilal Sapru

Mir Mustafa

D. N. Chowdhry

A.Satar Ranjur

CHAPTER XXII

Exodus - causes and allied problems

The exodus of Kashmir Hindus from the Valley of Kashmir, was inevitable rather than surprising. What, however, surprises about it, is their sudden mass exodus within a very short span of time, and the State as well as the Central Government being contributory factor to it, wittingly or unwittingly. The stark reality is that both these governments always joined hands in treating Hindu as "persona non grata" in Kashmir. The virus of this policy and such thinking poured down and entered the veins of younger generation of Muslims who regarded them as a hurdle in achieving Independent Islamic State or in the least, a full autonomous Muslim State. The semblance of secularism bestowed on or cultivated in Kashmir was, as such, sought to be demolished by the younger elements. The demolition of secular character of the state had become easier with the growth of Muslim fundamentalism and by indoctrination of the Muslims in general and their students in particular.

The facade of secularism was a cover to grant more concessions to Muslim which made accordingly more and more tight roping for Hindus in all walks of life. Secularism became a misnomer for uplifting Muslims with hostile temperament and compel Hindus to make room for Muslim, in the field they had marked an advancement. In view of this policy, Kashmiri secularism meant to give all qualified liberties, encouragement and leap forward to Muslims and push back Hindus to the morass of backwardness, abject penury and what not. It was not that where the Hindu is, let him continue and not to force him recede back, and buck up Muslim simultaneously to advance with long strides. This would have created harmonious advancement, but as against it, this policy of "leap forward and push back", created a tug of war and the government action itself, created chaos and confusion in the administration, with consequent conflict among the people involved in the tug of war. The government started a process of wiping out Hindus, though Kashmiri Muslims are far far better off economically than Hindus. The Kashmir Hindus, however, constitute a community of white collars and its members prefer white collar jobs, which are rarely offered or available to them in Kashmir. Therefore, with some exceptions, they struggled hard for their existence in Kashmir and still were giving education to their children under trying circumstances, which is their top priority.

Their young boys and girls didnot get admissions in classes of higher education easily, more so in Medical and technical colleges, notwithstanding the higher merit they possessed. Some among the let down used to go out of the Valley in search of admission in higher and technical educational institutions elsewhere in the country . They didnot, on their return after completion of education or training, easily get service in the Valley like many other Hindu boys and girls, as stated earlier. Most of them, after having been refused recruitment in Government service in Kashmir, left the Valley in search of service and livelihood. The bulk of younger generation of Hindus migrated from Kashmir, by and by, which used to be followed by subsequent migration of their old parents.

Hindus in the Valley are, economically almost squeezed. Their economic mainstay was agricultural land and government service. They were hit hard by Agrarian Reform laws enacted at different times after 1947. Only those who cultivated the land, have right to hold and own it. Land to tiller was as such, a progressive and welcome step. In the wake of these land reforms, Muslims alone were benefitted in Kashmir Valley by getting the ownership of the agricultural land of Hindus and not a single Hindu was benefitted as he was not to get land of any Muslim land lord. It is, however, a fact that Hindus used to sell even their golden ornaments and spent the sale proceeds on purchasing agricultural land, which used to stand in good stead to the widows, orphans and other dependents. By losing land, many Hindus felt uprooted in the Valley and lost interest in continuing to live in Kashmir as they had no other source of livelihood, coupled with restrictions and hostile discrimination observed in their recruitments to Government service and promotions. About these feeding sources of Hindus in Kashmir right from the time of Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad, Hindus have been openly told that they could get admission or service any where up to Cape Comorin in India, but the Muslims had to depend upon Kashmir alone and were to be absorbed here. While this inculcated and encouraged"separatist" tendency amongst Muslims, it forced Hindu educated youths to leave the Valley, by and by in search of their higher education and livelihood.

Most of the people do not want to leave their birth place and local environs. But Kashmir Hindus were compelled to leave Kashmir regularly for long past. This was a slow process of their exit from Kashmir and discrimination perpetrated against them. Time is, however, coming when saturation in services will block the free and easy chances of recruitment of Muslims too. In some rural areas, it is found that out of highly educated lot of Hindu boys and girls, only some selected post graduates were recruited in the education department, leaving out the rest and Muslim matriculates were prefered and recruited as against them. The matriculate boy of the Muslim tiller , who became owner of the land of Hindus, is recruited in service as backward, deriving benefit both ways. But the highly qualified destitute Hindu boy or girl was ignored and dropped and hard hit in either way. It is how discrimination and fanaticism has been injected in the society. This is true about the urban areas as well. It had also encouraged exodus of Hindus from Kashmir. It was, however, on individual level and not on mass scale.

In other spheres too, Hindu educated youths were not well received. In the matter of business and obtaining government loans for instance, he is ignored and discarded on the pretext that they have no merit or interest in these vocational activities. Then how a Hindu could live or be retained in Kashmir? And on how many fronts, he is to withstand the onslaughts? It was only one aspect, referred to their economic strain and stress, suffered on the basis of discrimination. But there have been political pressures as well which the Hindus in Kashmir underwent constantly. The Muslim militancy is culmination of all this decaying process which has brought climax of misery and exit to the Hindus. They were forced to have mass exodus from their land of birth. His Hindu culture, his temples and shrines are not safe, then what is he worth for living in Kashmir. It is not a question of militancy alone, nor every bad thing or trouble of Kashmiri Hindus is connected only with emergence of militancy on the surface, nor end of the militancy alone is solution of their problems and guarantee for their safe survival in Kashmir. Militancy is the culmination of age long process of perversion followed and allowed in Kashmir and not the cause of perversion itself. It, however, speedly and finally doomed them. Militancy aimed at physical liquidation of Hindus in Kashmir and has accelerated the process of their disintegration and destruction. They were earlier languishing separately and individually, or leaving the Valley of Kashmir singularly and mutely, but they are now languishing and bewailing collectively. Their shedding of tears were unnoticed then and their screams unheeded as there were no blood stains and spots, nor signs of hanging and visible killings.

Militancy is the last dig in uprooting the Hindus in Kashmir which threw them out enmasse but it was not the start of their misery in Kashmir. Had it not been so, why then the various important temples and shrines of the Hindus were placed under permanent guard of the security men, even long before start of the present Muslim militancy? Whether it was Ganesh temple at Ganpatyar, which is the Hindu dominated area in Srinagar, or elsewhere in the valley like Bhadra Kali Handwara, Asthapan Khrewa, Nagbal Anantnag, Lok Bhawan, Gautam Nag, Chandigam shrine and other dozens of sacred Hindu places, which have historical background too, were placed under the protection of security personnel for having been made targets of attack already. The Hindus and their places of worship alongwith their deities were, therefore, already under seige in Kashmir.

If Ganesh temple with its library and Dharmshala, was not safe in over whelmingly Hindu area, which other temple and shrine in Srinagar, or for that matter, in other parts of the Valley could remain safe. There are other numerous such places which were either in the process of being forcibly snatched from Hindus, or were already snatched like Asthapan Bhairov Mandir at Chattabla, Srinagar, which has become a den of vice and a place of urination for Muslims of the Vicinity. The Hindus have been for long knocking at the doors of the government but it always failed to dispense justice to them and continuously hurt their pride, their religious feelings and sentiments. The Central Government and also the U.P. Government very much figure in "Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid" dispute and the previous government reportedly killed hundreds of "Bhagats" of Lord Rama on the spot when the Hindus went to rebuild the "Ram temple" there in October, November, 1990. But where was the Central Government when religious places of Hindus in Kashmir, used to be desecrated, made targets of attack, some snatched forcibly and the devotees humiliated and religious feelings and sentiments of the Hindus flagrantly injured ? Why these double standards are set and applied and why the grievances of Kashmiri Hindus were never attended to, and their sufferings mitigated? The politics of Kashmir and social structure was modelled somewhat on a contradictory pattern and an unfair and inequitable system was laid and sustained. The bedrock of this system was ostensibly anti feudalism, yet it was not free from feudalistic features, it was averse to capitalism, yet it had the traits of capitalism, it tended to breed class strife, yet it was not socialism, it was pointing to nationalism, yet in substance, it was nothing but an epilogue of communalism.

So much hue and cry was raised that "Rath Yatra" caused communal tension and carnage in the country. But did anybody try to focus attention on the gatherings that used to take place and processions that were taken out by Muslims in Kashmir Valley shouting slogans, "Azadi Ka Matlab-Kya-La-ila illal-la (The meaning of our Independence is establishment of Islamic State) Another slogan, though old and revived, was "Asseh ghazheh aasun Pakistan-Bataw baighair Batnew saan (We want Pakistan, except Pandits, with Panditanies). But this slogan was now modified and it said: "Asseh ghazheh assumPakistan Batah maarith Batnew saan"(After killing Pandits we want Pakistan along with Panditanies)

This deadly slogan raised by Muslims, warning the Kashmiri Pandits and challenging their survival in Kashmir Valley, couldnot be taken in light vein. It was not a simple slogan raised by a few goons in the corner of a street or a lane to jibe a passer by Pandit or a Panditani , when the jeered person or persons would generally assimilate it without reaction, as used to happen in the past. This modified slogan was now raised and publicised regularly at different times, through loudspeakers fitted in the mosques, when Muslims of the respective Mohallas and areas thronged these mosques to offer prayers or to proclaim "Jehad". This was not, therefore, the task of some "misguided" Muslim youths alone, but an assault by a large section of the Muslims on the entire Hindu community of Kaashmir. The Muslim crowds in the mosques, have been willing participants in this "Jehad" and "assault" on the Hindus.

While in their respective mosques, joining the war cries of "Jehad" and "assault", they bothered least for their Hindu neighbours, their feelings, their state of mind as also tension and harassment generated by the above slogans. This dreadful situation was created for Hindus at various times through amplifiers fitted in the mosques, particularly on the night of January 20, 1990.

A migrant , S.N. Wali told me that he took the cry of above slogan, coming from the neighbouring mosques at Malapora, Srinagar, as clear warning from Muslims to the Hindus to vacate Kashmir. He, therefore, became restive and panicky about the womenfolk of his household, said he adding, "*Feeling much harassed and depressed on this mass warning , I couldnot depend on my Muslim neighvbours also*". He explained that it was start of his heart trouble and he and his family members lost no time in fleeing the Valley with empty hands.

Some Sikh youths of Srinagar gave me their reaction about these threatenings and war cries shouted through the mosque amplifiers. They were convinced that Kashmir had become worse than Pakistan, they told me adding, "We are not safe in Kashmir. We told Akali leader S. Simranjit Singh Mann about our insecurity when he visited Srinagar." Mann had visited Srinagar in last week of January, 1990. He assured the Sikhs that he would speak about this matter to the Governor and advised them to tell Muslims that they were with them, I was further told. The statement of Mann that appeared in the press later, seemed more concealing than revealing the real position of minorities in the Valley.

Kidnapping and killing of Kashmiri Hindus, howsoever barbarously, is regarded as if street dogs are killed. An entire community is held to ransom and uprooted, kicked off and brought to the verge of extinction, for no fault of theirs, except that members of this community are Hindus and loyal to India.

Hindus reared secularism all along in Kashmir. Who then is responsible for creating the present atmosphere? It is the Muslim militants and their supporters and sympathisers in Kashmir and outside Kashmir who created this horrified and explosive atmosphere with connivance of both, State as well as Central Government, from time to time. Kashmir had presented a grim spectacle long before "Rath Yatra" was undertaken by Lal Krishan Advani. Hindus in Kashmir had adjusted earlier in an atmosphere, none too better. The good will of a common Muslim that a Hindu enjoyed, received tremendous set back by the "gun culture" that cropped up in Kashmir,. When the life, honour and property of a Hindu was totally unsafe, threatened and violently attacked, it was too much to expect from him to stay back defenceless in Kashmir and as tenaciously as he did in the past in face of all other odds. He had put up with all discriminations in the fields of admissions, recruitments and appointments, promotions and faced and fought many other hardships. He feared now that with empty hands, and support and encouragement from none, he could no longer continue as such. He visualised the game in which he would be forced to lose his honour and religion. If he is gentle by nature, he is valiant, bold and daring as well. If he is poor,even then he is very keen about his self respect and honour. He could not, therefore, stay back in the Valley any longer under the given conditions and circumstances.

Kashmiri Muslim militants were provided with all sophisticated military equipment and training by Pakistan. During the Farooq regime ammunition was allegedly distributed among the workers of National Conference in Kashmir for their self defence, who were all Muslims. Why was then a Hindu singled out and ignored. National Conference no where came out collectively to express resentment against the behaviour of the militants and the secessionists, nor any line of resistance was taken and organised, nor the ammunition allegedly supplied to them by the government was until today used anywhere against the militants. Neither Kashmir Government nor Government of India ever furnished any arms to the Hindus and Sikhs, for self defence. How could they then resist the armed onslaught of militants in Kashmir?

The Kashmiri Hindus, however, never believed in arming themselves, which might have shattered the mutual confidence and caused schism between the two communities of Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus, therefore, always threw themselves at the mercy of Muslims. They never thought nor imagined that Kashmiri Muslims would ever come to wield gun against them and defy their belief as also betray their trust. The world stands witness to the unshakable faith of the Kashmiri Hindus in the goodness of a common Kashmiri Muslim, which was shaken by the budding Muslim youths as they took to terrorising them and kidnapping and killing them in a manner callously cruel and forcing their mass exit from the Valley. The restoration of the confidence lost and trust betrayed, is not now so easy a thing, nor will it escape the repercussions, dangerous and far reaching. When Mohamad Din, the Gujar of Tangmarg, who had the distinction of being the first person to have informed the government, about the Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir in 1965, could be killed by the militants after 25 years of the incident, what guarantee could the Kashmir Hindus have that they would not face the same fate, even worst, once again if they went back to Kashmir?

The Kashmiri Hindus as indicated above, never thought of fighting Muslims in Kashmir, even for self defence, nor therefore, ever prepared themselves for any confrontation and catastrophe, much less the present one. For them, an incredible situation has arisen and they are caught in napping. They had never contemplated that they would be let down in such a manner by the popular government of the State as also by the Central Government with its army and para military forces stationed in Kashmir Valley. I may even say that the Hindus and nationalist Muslims in Kashmir were affected by them all, as much as they betrayed national interests. By their grave omissions and commissions, right from 1947, all the Central Governments till date, with the people at the helm of affairs, have particularly rendered themselves amenable to stand in the dock and to hear the public verdict against them. The damage done, can hardly be undone, but the government need to get alert now to retrieve the position of failings and bunglings.

The slogan of "*Indian dogs go back*" was raised for long in Kashmir. Are not Kashmiri Hindus, Indians and does not the slogan require their exit, being Indians? This slogan was clearly applicable to them and also to the nationalist Muslims of Kashmir. Have the Governments for all this long period done anything substantial to forestall the raising and implementing this slogan. Neither the State nor the Central Government ever took any positive measures to lay at rest such voices of treason and hate.

The protagonists of these governments may say that they have done all they could do to cement and strengthen the mutual bonds between Kashmir and rest of the country by pampering the Muslims and trying to win them over. They may also advance the argument that they allowed withdrawal of conspiracy case against sheikh Mohamad Abdullah and some of his colleagues. They may also say that they brought him round and again inducted him to power as Chief Minister of the State as a result of the "Accord", after his wilderness of 22 years, as being the main representative of the people of Kashmir. They may also emphasise that they invested the Sheikh's son-in-law, G.M. Shah also with the state power in the hope that good administration may be provided to the people. It can also be said that an oral "Accord" was reached with the Sheikh's son-Dr Farooq Abdullah who also was saddled with power again in 1986.

But have these appeasements and "Accords" yielded any fruit in favour of the country? Have these strengthened the mutual ties or weaned away Kashmir from rest of the country? Have all these efforts gone in vain and instead contributed to bring Kashmir to the present disastrous position? Have not leaders been propagating all through, to create such or a similar situation in Kashmir, for forcing the Government of India to concede "Independence of Kashmir", when they were out of power? And when in power,did not they utilize the power to create the situation that struk at the very roots of Kashmir's relationship with rest of the country? This all needs a probe on one hand and a reappraisal of the policies and attitudes on the other, in exclusion to all those who have remained connected with it or have complicity in it. All these questions require serious and urgent deliberations and framing of a firm policy, otherwise Kashmir is going out of hands, at least for the Hindus of Kashmir. And all those persons and the parties who have so far come to occupy the seat of power in the Centre, shall be answerable to the nation and should not and cannot go scot free for their lapses.

For the last many years, posters used to be pasted in many parts of the city and the Valley, admonishing Hindus and asking them to convert to Islam or flee or be ready to face the consequences. No serious thought was give to such prejudicial activities of the anti India and anti Hindu lobbies working in Kashmir, though it used to create momentarily a flutter in the members of the miniscule Hindu community.

But the Central Government was under the illusion that the posters served only shallow threats and the State Government would not allow implementation of these threats, least knowing what was up the latter's sleeves.

A good number of Hindus who used to go out of the Valley in winter on a routine outing every year to escape the rigour of cold and winter there, could not go back to the Valley as the Hindus had started fleeing the Valley on a mass scale. Besides harassing, terrorising and killing the members of the Hindu community in Kashmir, the secessionists started their campaign by demanding not to let out premises for rental purposes to any non-Kashmiri-Hindu or Sikh and those who were already staying there as tenants, had to be evicted. The restriction then came to be enforced against all non-state subjects. This demand of the secessionists who became the terrorists, created some stir and was followed by the demand to close down Cinema Halls and liquor shops in the Valley. The militants enforced their commands and the concerned business came to a close totally, in presence of the Government, (if at all there was one) which acted more as a spectator than as an authority. It rendered hundreds of families to the verge of starvation. To them was subsequently added a sizable number of cigarette dealers who were also prohibited to carry on this trade. Video shops were also closed down and watching, televising or screening of video casettes for the purposes of entertainment were totally banned by the militants. Liquor Bars got closed by the militants and they made often surprise checks at the restaurants and bars to ensure the total closure of bars and complete prohibition of sale and purchase of liquor. In a tourist place like Kashmir, the prohibition on liquor is unwarranted.

The government did not (or could not) take any notice at all, of this parallel Government run by the militants who were exercising their "authority" not only without mandate of law, but in clear breach, contravention and defiance of law of the land. Restrictions have been placed on the ladies in the matter of dress and they have been commanded to use a veil (Burqa) when they move out of their residence. This all was countenanced by the Government only at the peril of national interests and brought Kashmir to its present position. Teerath Ram Amila[255] M.P. sensed trouble and did not, as such, hesitate to unfold the deteriorating situation in Kashmir, while he spoke in Rajya Sabha in early 1989. Some Muslims in Kashmir opposed it as being "false allegations", and criticised him apparently, as he lid off the cauldron . The secessionists perhaps wanted to keep the world outside ignorant about the "ground realities" in Kashmir. If it were not so what have they to say about the Kashmir situation today? The Government even then did not move to set the matters right.

This all was done in the name of creating a society on basis of "Nizam-e-

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[255] *Mr. Teerath Ram Amila is a member of Congress Party in Jammu & Kashmir and also a member of Rajya Sabha from this State.*

Mustaffa". Kashmir was, therefore, being converted into a Muslim theocratic State and whatever semblance of secularism was there, was done away with.

On Fridays, the shops also would remain closed for the prayer timings in the day. The government offices had recess for the prayers since the Maharaja's time. The militants desired to observe a full day holiday on Fridays instead of Sundays.

It showed that the militant outfits were moving onwards systematically. They were fastening their grip over political, religious and economical activities and gaining momentum step by step and thus their sphere of influence and activities increased. They brought, therefore, the entire Valley under their fold and hold within some time. They consolidated the support of Muslims by exploiting their religious sentiments. The main plank of the militants, therefore, was to get political mileage by preaching Islamic fundamentalism and to use the Hindus as a pawn on their political chess board. They had twin planning and objective therefor, firstly to kill some Hindus and terrorise them into surrender and subjugation and to have their full support and sacrifice for their fanatic political movement of separation from India. Secondly, if Hindus do not surrender and toe their line, they would run away from the Valley of Kashmir for their safety, rendering their job easier, as their mass exit would mean two thirds achievement for them.

Kashmiri Pandits as bulk of Kashmiri Hindus are, constitute a bulwark in the way of divisive and destabilising forces in their sinister objective of separation from India. They are the only community after Sunni Muslims who are by and large, spread over in the length and breadth of the Valley of Kashmir though sparingly .

In absence of Hindus, Kashmir would be nearer to "Independence" and to a "theocratic Muslim State", but farther from "secular" Kashmir. It is now a "virtual" Pakistan, which it otherwise was tending to become. The Militants, systematically launched their campaign their first target were Hindus. They succeeded in this target and boast, whether they get independence or not, that they have been able to finish Batta (Kashmiri Pandits) in Kashmir, who was a great hurdle in their way. They rejoiced over it and regarded it as no mean achievement, though Hindus have no power rivalry with Muslims.

The Hindus in Kashmir were already facing odds, as mentioned earlier, and the Muslim fundamentalists desired them to merge with the local Muslim majority or to make exit, otherwise face the consequences. They , however, preferred to stay back as usual, and faced the consequences. The killing of Hindus started. Hand written posters were pasted individually on the doors of many Hindus in the city of Srinagar and some other places in the Valley, asking them to keep their daughters ready, the bridegrooms were coming with the "Baraat" to take their brides. In certain cases, "Mehandi" packets also were thrown at the door steps of some Hindus, directing them to dip the hands of their girls in the liquid of "Mehandi" on the eve of nuptial, as the grooms would come with the "Baraat".

The Hindus in Kashmir invariably adjusted with the circumstances in Kashmir but never contented with the situation developing there. In order to give a feel of the rigour of appalling conditions they lived in, and the monstrous political contour that was shaping, the Hindus had been cautioning the Governments right from the sixtees about their likely and compulsive migration from Kashmir.

> *"Mr. Prem Nath Ghasi, President of the Committee, alleged that Police officials at Habbakadal yesterday were mere "onlookers" and turned down the people's requests for protection.......*
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> *Mr. Ghasi said the "high-handedness" of the Kashmir Government would lead to a mass exodus from the State. This decision would be conveyed to the Governor to be relayed to the Central Government," he added.*[256]

Some migration in fact, took place in 1986 in the wake of communal disturbances and desecration of the Hindu temples in Anantnag district and some other places of the Valley. A large number of the Kashmir Hindus had decided then to leave Kashmir and preparations for it were under foot.

The Central Government was requested by some quarters to stop this exodus.

> *"The All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference (Jammu) has appealed to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to intervene to stop the "exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the rural areas of the State.*
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> *Conference President S.N. Kachru, in a telegram to Mr. Gandhi, said the Kashmiri Pandits living in the rural areas were in "utter panic" as they were facing a "planned social boycott".*[257]

The mass migration of Hindus from Kashmir in 1986 was, however, stopped by the Government. It was possible only as the gun wielding militants were not in the open then to kill the Hindus dastardly. However, the inference was that the Central Government would be taking all the necessary measures to forestall the recurrence of such unhealthy and ugly scenes in future. But it was not known that something worst was in store for Kashmir Hindus. It was also not known that the Central Government was worn out, and was in the process of run out in Kashmir.

Exodus of Kashmir Hindus from the Valley of Kashmir was, under the conditions mentioned, bound to occur and it did. It is the largest ever exodus from Kashmir. It included the exodus of Sikhs, partly. This exodus was a protest by the migrants against the Central Government for its failure to protect them and their honour in Kashmir and to retain Kashmir effectively. It was nevertheless, a "slap" to the Government of India and shame for the people that a section of them was forced to migrate from Kashmir and became refugees in their own country . This exodus was primarily of Hindus and Sikhs, but the Kashmir Government tried to secularise it. The Government viewed it as follows:

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[256] *The Hindustan Times, August 6, 1967. Late Mr. Ghasi was the Acting President of Kashmir Hindu Action Committee.*

[257] *This news item was released by PTI on March 6, 1986, from New Delhi and had appeared in some newspapers.*

> *"Never before in the history of Jammu & Kashmir such a vast exodus of any community (over 2 lakh Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs and Muslims) was seen from any area of the State since independence as was witnessed by 1990 right from the month of January. This was a great human tragedy of its own kind."*[258]

During the suppression, oppression and conversion of Hindus in Kashmir a stage had come under the Muslim rule when only eleven Hindu families stayed back and lived in the Valley and rest fled to safety. Some biased writers say this is not a historical fact but only a myth. What have they to say now when out of eighty thousand Hindu families, not even eight thousand of them are spared so far to live in Kashmir and rest have been forced to migrate from the Valley? It may seem incredible but the fact remains that this human tragedy occurred in this modern and progressive world of twentieth century. Will it also be termed as a myth in distant future ?

Some left the Valley in their domestic clothes without finding time to change the dress or to carry anything alongwith, and others deserted their dwelling places without letting anybody know about it. The decision to flee was not obviously prompted or instigated, nor was it joint or collective, but sheerly a personal decision of the migrant who was compelled to take it under the prevailing circumstances. It was, therefore, migrant's own individual assessment of the situation, and the conclusion was common and the same drawn by all as if taken collectively, to flee to the safer places, to escape humiliation, torture and killings.

Their residential houses, household wares and valuables like golden ornaments, and other properties have been generally left behind in the Valley. Most of them had to leave their Bank deposits, Cheque Books, Pass Books, Bank lockers and Pension Books there. Their income yielding assets, lands and orchards, are forsaken and uncared for. Majority of the Post office and Bank depositors are in abject condition. The Government announced long back that their Accounts would be transferred to other places. Despite lapse of a long time, no such Accounts of the many applicants have been transferred from Banks and Post Offices in the Valley, barring some cases.

The depositors and Pensioners, in absence of their requisite documents were prepared to swear affidavits in order to draw their pensions etc., which was not agreed to, by the concerned authorities in Jammu. The Bank and Government employees staying back in the Valley are mostly Muslims and they take pleasure in defying the demands and claims of the migrants.

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258. *Youth Information, Deceber, 1990, issued by the Information Dept. J &K Govt.*

A retired Gazetted Officer of Kashmir Education Service, Dhina Nath Dhar after feeling difficulty in drawing pension from Jammu, as his pension account is with J & K Bank, arranged to send a cheque for a few thousand rupees to Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Maharajganj in Srinagar for encashment in absence of his pension pass book (which is lying in Srinagar). The cheque was wrongly dishonoured on the ground that he did not have sufficient funds there, as his pension due was not credited to him. He then asserted that the funds were sufficient as his pension had to be credited but he do not receive any payment. "It was only harassment and annoyance caused to the migrants," Dhar pointed out to me.

Many migrant Government employees are reaching age of superannuation and some have already retired during this period. Their pension is not getting fixed nor they get their full G.P.Fund and other due emoluments as their service record is not being sent to Jammu from the Valley, for, the Muslim Government employees in Kashmir are non cooperative. Such things are additional tortures to the migrants. The retiring or retired government employees are being put to a loss of substantial amount. They have been avoided to pay salary dues for eight months as preparatopry leave to retirement. The government is calously treating the migrant employees not on duty but on leave.

Every migrant has to narrate this or that tale of woe and worry and the harsh deal received here or there. Displaced persons from the Valley encounter various type of hardships and problems. Their first problem is environmental which includes weather as they are not acclimatized to the acute heat of Jammu or other planes in the country which entail them huge expenses on one hand and make their living miserable on the other. They are unable to bear the scorching heat and have not reconciled to this situation mentally .

They suffer from many diseases which they were unaware of, in the cold atmosphere of the Valley. Some died of sunstroke, others died of dehydration. Many developed heart ailments due to tension and other reasons. Then dwelling conditions are unsatisfactory. Yet others suffered and died of water borne diseases. Still others are annoyed by skin diseases, unknown to them hitherto. Snake and scorpion bites have scared them and some lives have been lost due to these painful and fatal bites. But have these bites been preferable as against the biting by other "fellows" in the Valley, who have driven them out?Many migrants appeared to have passed away untimely under above conditions.

About 54,000 Hindu, Sikh families from Kashmir are registered with Relief Commissioner Jammu as migrants. About 5000 families only have been provided accommodation in camps, who are living under unhygienic conditions. Number of tents are shabby and in bad shape. During the time of heavy showers and wind, their plight becomes all the more pathetic. Many of the tents get dislocated and the occupants worried. During scorching heat in the summer, they feel acutely thirsty, restlesss and distressed due to scarcity of water and at times anguish for a drop of it to drink. The condition of bulk of other migrants living in privately hired accommodation is also not satisfactory.

Some suicide cases of the migrants have also been noticed whereas it was almost nil in the Valley. Among other such cases, one Master Zutshi (14 years old) committed suicide at Gandhinagar, Jammu in the last week of May, 1990. He yearned for the Valley and felt dejected and fretted on being unable to go back to Srinagar in consequence of hostile atmosphere there. The mortality rate of the migrants has also increased as compared to what was their death rate in the Valley. At Jheri camp, I found almost every week death of one or two migrants especially budding youths, male and female, during the days I used to visit the camp.

Migrants depressed psychologically, their camps also cause them depression which constitute health hazards. They donot get the medical aid and the one provided is nominal and inadequate. If any migrant is taken ill, he has to incur huge expenses by way of medical treatment to save himself or herself. He or she has to suffer badly and even meet his end in case he or she cannot afford to bear the expenses. I know about a few persons who collapsed because of want of money for treatment. Even many of the living are half dead and nothing was done for the dying people.

In Delhi also, the migrants meet the same fate. I know about the expenses incurred by a migrant family on ordinary illness of their infant. Under medical prescription, the infant child was to be administered two injections each twice a day. The cost of one injection was Rs. 46 and the other Rs.8. This treatment of the infant continued for a few days and their all told expenses came to nearly one thousand rupees.

Can a bare living with such incidental expenses, be possible for a migrant family unless substantial income is ensured to them? How is the Government satisfied then with the conditions of the migrants who are suffering because of their wrong policies and serious omissions and commissions.

In Jammu, the migrants have been exploited in connection with cash relief. Some organisations cropped up and collected money in their name and also in collusion with the concerned Government authorities, prepared many fake ration tickets and used to draw cash relief wrongly and regularly. Some of the concerned revenue authorities also pocketed huge amounts of relief money. One of the Tehsildars (non-migrant) deputed by the Government, I was secretly informed, had prepared separately for his own income, as many as 127 fake ration tickets against which he was appropriating more than one lakh rupees (at Rs. 1,000/-each ticket) every month, being himself the authority concerned for verification and disbursement of the cash relief in addition to his share in the fake relief tickets of others. In presence of such extra cells created or connived at, the genuine migrants suffer and are throttled up if they dare to articulate their grievances.[259] Those who are not in a position to line the pockets of concerned revenue authorities or donot want to do that, are harassed and annoyed and avoided payments in time. They are made to spend most of the time of the month in coming and going for collection of their cash relief. How the Government have locked them in a miserable and time consuming strife, apart from which they donot find a tension free moment to think and do anything?

The Government pays cash relief to the "Muslim migrants" also who are said to include militants or their supporters and sympathisers. Unlike Hindus (Sikhs included), they have not to waste time and hanker after the authorities and stand personally in long queus to receive cash relief. The Government has observed discrimination here also and segregated Hindu and Muslim. The Government is compelling the Hindus to furnish their and their family photographs which they do not ask Muslims to furnish, who are provided cash relief secretly and confidentially at their places.

Area wise Relief Committees of the migrants be formed and invested with the authority and powers of settling all claims and complaints of the migrants and of distributing the entire relief to them through these Committees, to the exclusion of the revenue and other Government authorities on this level. The Government must keep in mind, both in the State and in the Centre, that the migrants donot crave for pittance. Their sufferings are due to the tragic catastrophe that has befell them due to lack of political sagacity and administrative acumen coupled with their defective policies pursued by the Government at their cost. How long the migrants can continue like this? The continuance of the migrants, as such, can be at their cost as well.

As already stated, the migrants have left over their entire property, immovable and movable, in the Valley of Kashmir. Their innumerable houses have been burnt down and damaged by the militants in Srinagar and different other parts of the Valley. Most of their houses have been looted and the entire movable property plundered, damaged and pilferaged. In many cases it is the only external structures of the migrants' houses that exist now and no household valuables and materials are inside. In other cases, it is the shambles and the debris alone of their houses where once upon a time, the migrants and their ancestors had lived. Such migrants also need to be paid adequate compensation immediately. Once insured properties of the migrants, must be paid compensation according to the amount the property was insured for, lastly in Kashmir which, however, could not be renewed after migration.

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[259] *The author is also a migrant. He has not, however, drawn any cash relief from the Government or any other sources, nor any of his family member is drawing it. In pursuance to the general policy of high-handedness and discrimination adopted against Kashmir Hindus in general and the migrants in particular, the State Government (Tourism Directorate) has failed to make payments of monthly retainership and other bills due to the author from early 1990, though his professional services as standing counsel are still availed of and utilised by it. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has also withheld his payments on the plea of Commission having gone bankrupt in Kashmir Valley. Other government and private institutions have also not made him payments under the cover of abnormalcy in Kashmir. Meanwhile, the author was relieved of Rs.6,500 in Delhi by a pick pocket on February 9, 1991, regarding which the Police Control Room Delhi was informed telephonically before he left for Jammu on the same day. The author also lost his brief case, containing some important and valuable papers etc., while travelling by Rail from Jammu to Delhi on April 10, 1991, putting him again to a great loss. The attitude of the Government, both State and Central, however, reflects the sad state of affairs.*

Not a small number of migrants are having agricultural land, in the Valley, they are left as helpless and barren as their uncultivated land currently is. Neither are they able to produce anything from this land nor they earn now any livelihood out of it. Many migrants have their own orchards in the Valley. They are divested of the huge income that these orchards fetched them previously.

Being absent from the spot, the orchards of the migrants remained uncared for in the Valley . Their fruit laden trees did not yield them any benefit or income and the entire fruit was wasted. The Government, particularly the Central Government, went out of its way to support Muslim tradesmen and orchardists in Kashmir, on the plea of militancy and consequent failure of tourist season. An appreciable gesture indeed! Railway ministry purchased the fruit in the Valley for sale at different Railway Stations in the country. Other Central ministers purchased Kashmiri handicrafts, by way of help to Kashmiri Muslims.

The Central Government even allotted temporary shop sites, as a special case, to Kashmir Muslim traders at Connaught Place Delhi for exhibition and sale of their products in Delhi. The migrant tradesmen also demanded the provision of above shops, though temporary, but were refused this allotment. It is reported that all Kashmir products and fruits were marketed and sold with the help of the Government of India, even already rejected articles of Kashmir arts and crafts as well as decayed fruits were purchased. The 'Crafts Bazars' were organised in different places.

> *"The State Handicrafts Directorate has organised 'crafts bazars' to give financial support to over 300,000 artisans, who are involved in the handicrafts industry in the Valley, Mr. Adil Naqash, incharge of handicrafts bazaars in the capital said............*
>
> *The State Government had earlier organised several handicraft exhibitions which had helped to increase its sales.*
>
> *The directorate has organised such crafts bazaars in Calcutta, Bangalore and other places, Mr. Adil said the directorate, in collaboration with the textile ministry had offered various incentives to artisans, which*

include transportation of goods and boarding and lodging facilities".[260]

But the Government did not bother for those who were directly hit by the militancy which forced them to migrate from the Valley. Kashmir Hindu was discriminated against here also. Despite being more sufferer from the militancy, he was not befriended and fruits of his orchards were allowed to get wasted but were not collected through Government agency and paid the price therefor to the migrants. This fruit also could be sold outside the State in the same manner as fruits of others. In one of my speeches delivered at Jehri camp in September, 1990. I had demanded, among other things, collection and purchase of the standing fruits of the migrants' orchards in the Valley, or else the Government should pay them immediate compensation therefor. But the Government seemed not to bother about the migrants.

It is a strange working of the Central Government that those who sympathised with and even in some cases supported the militants, have been looked after well, but who were reduced to penury due to the militants, are ignored and by passed, no matter whichever the Government or whosoever the person is or has been at the helm of affairs in New Delhi.

The attitude of the Government towards the Kashmiri migrants has always been obnoxious. They detested the cold treatment accorded to them by the government. In a rally of the migrants at Boat Club New Delhi, a memorandum was adopted on March 8, 1990 and presented to the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh. It inter alia says:

> *"We are at a loss to understand why your Government has failed to provide succour to the refugees of the minority community who have fled on account of the holocaust in the Valley and have come to Delhi..............They are facing tragic situation only because of the anti national groups in Kashmir who consider them to be the outposts of India in Kashmir and the activities of those anti national groups compelled them to flee from their homes. Had such a situation arisen in any other democratic country, the Government would have gone all out to provide full relief to such persons. Any lapse on the part of the Government in such a country would have resulted in the fall of that Government".*

Around mid July 1990, a massive convention of Hindu Sikh migrants was held in Jammu and among other demands, the demand for "quasi permanent" settlement of the migrants till normalisation of conditions in the Valley and creation of congenial atmosphere for their return and honourable living there, was raised. But the Government, including the present one, has not been fair to the migrants and are simply lingering on their matters, causing them additional torture and hardships. The Kashmiri Pandit Yuvak Sabha (of Kashmir) and Hindu Sahita Samiti had

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260. The Samachar Post, Delhi, March 17, 1991.

started fasts and "dharna" for implementation of various and just demands of the migrants. The Government as usual, appears to be in deep slumber so far as the migrants are concerned.

The Government has utterly failed to normalise the situation in Kashmir. As such, the migrants cannot be expected to go back under the prevailing circumstances. They can be again made targets of militancy at any time in case they returned to the Valley. The Government posts vacated by the migrant employees have been filled up by Kashmiri Muslims. Thousands have been recruited in CRPF, BSF and State Police Forces and Kashmiri Hindus have totally been ignored. About 15,000 jobs were in fact, created by the Central Government, for absorption of Kashmir Muslims in Police forces. As such, another mischief is played. The Central Staff Selection Commission has also brought itself into focus. They flouted all rules, norms and procedures for recruiting Kashimiri Muslims, about 1600 of whom have been appointed so far, ignoring Kashmiri Hindus. The Central Selection Commission spend much time in the Valley for recruiting the Muslim candidates to the exclusion of Hindus, very recently.

With subsidy of Rs. 5 crore from Government of India, HMT factory has been reopened in Srinagar for the benefit of Muslim employees. Promotions have been conferred on many of them at the cost of and in place of migrant Hindu staff, bulk of whom is still jobless and paid only 75% of their pay. Those adjusted among them outside the State, though temporarily, work on demotion by implication of the orders. And these postings also have been made in some cases, somewhat a callous manner. Basanti Bhandari has been, for instance, adjusted at HMT Kalamassery (Kerala) while her husband working in Central Excise Department, has been posted by the Central Government at Chandigarh. P.K. Pandita with indifferent health, has been posted at HMT Pinjore and his wife Guddy Waza is adjusted at HMT Bangalore. Total break and disintegration of migrant families and houses is getting accelerated and completed. Other Public Sector unit or a Private Sector concern, desiring to shift from Kashmir Valley to Jammu, which could avail services of their migrant workers and recruit some jobless youths of Jammu, have also not been permitted by the Government to shift:

> *"Union Carbide and JK Telecom have been requesting the Government for permission to shift to Jammu, but the State authorities have decided not to allow any industrial unit to shift out of the Valley."* [261]

Hindu educational and other institutions which were receiving Government grant-in-aid before migration of its staff from the Valley, have also been ruined and their salaries and other benefits with held. They have not been paid full salaries and other emoluments. The Hindu businessmen in Kashmir with substantial income

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261. India Today, April 30, 1991.

can hardly afford to live with families on monthly cash relief of Rs. 800/- or Rs. 1000/- Their entire trade and business has automatically been snatched in the Valley. This business has gone now to the Muslims and the migrant business men have been thus reduced to a pathetic state, with no facilities and encouragement. How can then the Muslims like the return of migrants and their families? They have eliminated tactfully the Hindus and finished their prospects of employment, trade and survival in Kashmir. A large section of Muslims, therefore, do not want Hindus to return. A glimpse of it can be had from an open letter by a Muslim Professor of Kashmir University. The letter is a reaction to a news feature that the Hindustan Times published about hopeful return of the migrants to the Valley. The hope of return, according to this letter:

> *"is based on an ill-conceived notion that any Kashmiri Pandit (Hindu) who returns to the Kashmir Valley shall be accepted by the militants and not punished by them for the sins he has not committed".*
>
> *Dreaded pro-Pakistan militant organisations like Hizbul Mujahideen, Al-Omar, Students Liberation Front and Muslim Janbaz Force have categorically decided that when Kashmiri migrants start returning to the Valley, prominent amongst them shall be taken as hostages and set free only after top militants behind the bars are released. Otherwise, the migrants shall meet the fate of our University Vice Chancellor, Mushirul Haq and HMT General Manager, Mr. Khera.*
>
> *Secondly, some Kashmiri Hindu migrants particularly a few politicians and journalists have not stopped their malicious campaign against Kashmiri Muslims with the result that all migrants are now taken as staunch enemies of Kashmiri Muslims. In this campaign, most of the accusations have proved to be absolutely baseless and false.*
>
> *The Kashmiri Pandits shall have to pay the price for their mass exodus for a much longer time now. If they return, they will be annihilated one by one by hardcore terrorists.*
>
> *It would be advisable if one lakh odd Kashmiri Pandits are permanently settled outside Kashmir for their own safety and security."* [262]

What the Government is then going to do with the migrants? Is the Government prepared to pay them adequate compensation in cash immediately for their entire property left over by them in Kashmir? The migrants cannot take everything lying down, nor the Government can take them for granted. The matters have reached now a crucial stage and cannot be lingered on indefinitely at the cost of the migrants which is augmenting their mental and physical torture and the government seems to perpetuate it.

262. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, February 15, 1991. The letter published in this paper is from Prof. A.G. Mir, Kashmir Univrsity campus, Naseem Bagh, Srinagar.

The lurking uncertainity about their future job prospects and hurdles in getting their children educated properly as well as the economic distress that they are suffering from, aggravate their agony and multiply their problems.

The Government has referred to these displaced persons deliberately as "migrants", which in fact, they are not. Their exodus from the Valley has not been their voluntary act but result of barbarious kidnappings and killings of their community members as well as threats to their honour, life, culture and property. The word "migrant" has been used now as a matter of convenience only. They are for all practical purposes refugees and need to be granted the refugee status and conferred the due benefits and facilities under that catagory of human beings, berefted as these are, even of bare human rights.

As per Geneva Convention of July 28, 1951, the Kashmir migrants fall within the catagory of refugees. It defines a refugee as a person who has had to leave his or her "homeland" on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and who is "unable" or because of the flight unwilling "to seek the protection" of the "home country".

This Geneva Convention has been upheld so far by 107 countries of the world which have signed and ratified it. After forced exodus from Kashmir, the migrants have come within the definition and ambit of "refugee", which has international recognition . The "home country" of these refugees has failed to provide them any protection in Kashmir - their homeland, and they are unable to seek the same, as the Government have always been sacrificing them on the altar of political expediency, appeasement of anti national elements and their lust for power. The "Kashmir refugees" constitute a test case, not for India alone but for the whole world. The matter doesnot, however, seem to have been yet looked in its proper perspective. The signatory countires of the aforesaid Geneva Convention may make their stand known to the World viz-a-viz the Kashmir migrants.

A migrant youth languishing with bed sores in a Jammu Camp

CHAPTER XXIII

Conflicts and crisis that brewed up

Muslims in Kashmir gave their support and had the sympathies, by and large, with the militants in the initial stage. It was more so because of non-effectiveness of the government, both State and Central. The people thought that they were at the threshhold of "independence" and believed that the militants with the popular sympathy and support, would "wrest" Kashmir from the Union of India. "*When I landed at Srinagar Airport, there were only two Indians in Kashmir*",said Jagmohan to a politician, adding, "*myself and Marwah*".[263] It was not an incorrect statement. It appeared that virtually the crest of India had fallen in Kashmir.

An impression was gained by the people that the Government of India was not capable of retaining Kashmir and the State Government appeared to be a consenting party to the alienation of Kashmir from the rest of the country. People in large numbers, therefore, associated with the militants and hailed their armed insurgency. They espoused their cause, took out large processions often, both by men and women and demanded separation from India. Mass excitement was there and they were afforded a chance of involvement in this anti national upsurge.

The climax was reached when Rubiya Sayeed, daughter of then Home Minister, Mufti Syed, was released by the militants after the government had met their demands. Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, however, took a firm stand whatever the reasons, and resisted letting off the top five militants.

> *"The Chief Minister had conveyed to the Prime Minister on December 12 in Delhi that he could not do so. It would boost the morale of the anti national elements. He insisted that his Government was exploring some other sources to secure the safe release of the girl.*
>
> *The Chief Minister had already told the Prime Minister that he could release Sher Khan (Pak national) only if the Union Government revoked detention and ordered his deportation. He wanted all this in writing".*[264]

This episode and the events that followed, changed further the contour of the situation which from hope turned to one of despair and from strict handling to one of "fondling and flirtations". The Central Government unconditionally accepted the demands of the militants to set free all the five top arrested militants. These militants were, therefore, released in lieu of Rubiya which on the one hand, gave militants an official recognition and moral boosting, conferring on them superiority and on the other, changed the psyche of all Kashmiris, who concluded that the

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[263] *These words were spoken to Mr. Dhanraj Bhargotra, who conveyed ithem to the author.*

[264] *The Voice of Millions, New Delhi, January 15, 1990.*

Central Government had surrendered before the militants and was not in a position to smash them. This gave an upper hand to the militants who cited this and other events as examples of their success on the path of "freedom" and assured people that they would wrest the "independence" shortly, and asked for their support.

Losing faith in the Government's capacity and its policy of handling the situation, the people believed in the militants' and on the whole Muslims began to sympathise and align with them. On December 13, 1989 when the top five militants were released, a large number of Muslims, both men and women, made jubilations and celebrated the occasion of militants' release with great fervour , pleasure and enthusiasm. The Muslim youth openly collected funds from the public to celebrate the event. In the evening unprecedented illumination was made in Kashmir, on public streets and places, bridges and private houses. This was a significant step for open involvement of the masses in the militancy registering moral support for the militants. This went a long way for total alienation of Kashmiri Muslims from India.

The employees of Government Undertakings and others in the State services, conveniently and openly involved themselves, as such, with the militants' anti India movement, as other sections of the Muslims did. The following news item, for instance, reveals:

> *"Two huge processions, besides several others, were taken out today by the auto-rickshaw drivers and shopkeepers respectively which handed over their memoranda at the United Nations Group observers' headquarters here, demanding the "Right of self-determination" for the people of Kashmir.*
>
> *According to the reports, drivers of three-wheelers ....were carrying flags of various organisations and banners demanding "freedom".*
>
> *However, round about 1.30 P.M. the employees of SRTC (State Road Transport Corporation) and shopkeepers also took out a peaceful procession carrying JKLF, JKPL, JKHM and "Azad Kashmir" flags and banners reading slogans for "freedom" with them. They too submitted their memoranda, pressurising for plebiscite in Kashmir, at the UNO headquarters here."*[265]

Jag Mohan was a dynamic Governor. He was keen to restore Indian authority in Kashmir and to effect improvement in the law and order situation. He evolved and represented a policy about Kashmir; a policy of owning pro-India elements and winning over the secessionists to the possible extent and isolating and discarding all others who did not like to mend or continued to pursue anti India line. Jag Mohan, therefore, had a policy and administrative acumen, coupled with dash to achieve his objective. He, as such, acted and acted zealously unlike other Governors that Kashmir has witnessed so far. He had succeeded to a fair extent in improving the

[265] *The Daily Samachar Post, Srinagar, February 27, 1990.*

conditions in Kashmir, but the militants planned and assassinated Moulvi Farooq on May 21, 1990, in order to keep their militancy alive which otherwise was at the verge of collapse.

Not being a politician, Jag Mohan erred in not withdrawing the paramilitary forces immediately from the sensitive areas of Srinagar on assassination of Moulvi Farooq. Pro-Moulvi elements came out in the streets to fight out the members of the hostile group. Although false announcements were made in the down town by the men connected with the assassins that Jag Mohan was responsible for killing Moulvi Farooq, yet it had no impact on the masses as they knew about the militant outfits whose handiwork it was. The hostile militants sensing their failure to cause anti Jag Mohan stir and fearing open confrontation and blood bath between the pro-Moulvi and the anti- Moulvi groups, sought to provoke the armed police forces posted in the area, which resulted in unfortunate firing. And a number of innocent mourners got killed shockingly in this firing! What could be the death trap for many of the anti Moulvi militants, became thus a shield for them within moments.

With the removal of Jag Mohan as Governor, the Government again pursued the old and usual policy of "drift and dodge". The net result was that what Jag Mohan had achieved in Kashmir was all lost and his removal was a great achievement for anti-India forces. The conditions, therefore, deteriorated and militancy escalated.

All the anti India and pro secessionists were trying their best to get Jag Mohan dislodged, as they saw ultimate failure of their adventurism in case he had continued there. Conspiracies were, therefore, hatched to dislodge Jag Mohan and the Government fell prey and the conspirators succeeded.It were they who used to create deliberately a hue and cry against him and dubbed him as a communalist and worked openly against him. Any body who would watch Indian interests in Kashmir is disliked and branded by these elements whether in Government or out of it, as a communalist or Indian agent. Jag Mohan has served Muslims of Kashmir to a great extent. He did not ignore nevertheless, Hindus of Kashmir as others did. Non-neglect of Hindus in Kashmir and looking after national interests, are his sins that he was so much criticised for. Because of this, Dr. Farooq Abdullah also resigned from Chief Ministership on January 17, 1990 and wanted to escape the exposure of his acts of omission and commission. He hinted to his men to campaign in favour of militants and against Jag Mohan. It is the reason for false propaganda made against him, otherwise he served Kashmir far better than any other person or authority as indicated in earlier pages.

After such a long time, the Government has not been able to crush the militancy in Kashmir. The militants would be able to sustain their armed confrontation for such a long, was beyond expectations. Prior to their attack on any picket of security force, the militants would inform the concerned employees for instance, electricity department, to disconnect electricity at a particular point of time say sharp in the evening at 8.30. A few minutes earlier, the militants would reach the spot, say at about 8.28 P.M. The electricity would go off at the specified time and the militants would take the security men unaware in the dark and strike and fire volleys of bullets on them, killing or injuring all or some of them. They would also throw a hand grenade in front of a security post or vehicle and spray bullets on them from a hidden place. But now not only a few but a contingent of militants who are reported to include Afghan militants and Pakistani army, make collectively a strong attack on the security men. The fierce fighting, unlike in the past, takes place for hours together now in the city of Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir Valley. Security men also suffer huge casualties which the Government suppresses and does not take the nation into confidence about it.

Militants again demanded the release of five other arrested ultras in lieu of the release of Nahida Imtiaz, daughter of a National Conference M.P. Prof. Saif ud-Din Soz. The Government surrendered again and acceded to the demand of the militants. She was set free on March 7, 1991. As per State Government, only one captive militant was set at liberty. But according to the information of the independent media, 4 to 5 militants had to be released in exchange of Nahida Imtiaz. What is, however, highly disgraceful about it, is not the release of captives on either side, but the approach that Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar adopted in the matter He appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharief to help get Nahida Imtiaz released. She was kidnapped and held in captivity by the militants in Kashmir, which is a part of India. She was neither kidnapped by any Pakistani nor was detained in Pakistan. But the request for her release was made to the Prime Minister of a foreign country by the Shekhar Government which did not behove India nor was in tune with the dignity of this great nation.

> *"An official spokesman said today that the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharief was approached by India for help in the release of Mrs. Nahida by her captors"*.[266]

It is believed, therefore, that Nahida Imtiaz was set free by Kashmiri militants on the intervention of Pakistan Prime Minister. His Indian counterpart stooped so low as to seek her release through a foreign country when she was kidnapped and kept in confinement not in that country but by local militants in Kashmir.

> *"It is well established that Ms. Nahida Imtiaz ....was released by the terrorists only after the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Shariff, had directed them to set her free."* [267]

It was not only unbecoming of the Prime Minister of the world's largest par-

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266. The Times of India, March 9, 1991.

267. The Patriot, New Delhi, May 7, 1991.

liamentary democracy to belittle the dignity of the exalted office which impinged on the authority and sovereignty of India. Chandra Shekhar thus allowed and connived at, rather further invited unwittingly and indirectly interference of Pakistan in Kashmir. This approach has been shameful which is ridiculous not only for him but for the whole nation. It smacks of dangerous thinking and trend on India's part and she may accordingly lose many a thing in Kashmir. The nation will have to prepare to fight against it vigorously. Congress Governments and non-Congress Governments in the Centre are all responsible for the present deplorable conditions in Kashmir. All these rulers deserve strong public indictment.

Whenever any Hindu migrant, male or female, returned to the Valley for bringing some needy and necessary household things from his or her dwelling house in Kashmir, or spending some hot months or residing again there, or getting some personal papers or necessary official information pertaining to his/her service, from the respective institution and office, he/she was invariably assassinated in cold blood on the false plea that the returnee had come after receiving arms training from Shiv Sena, while Shiv Sena surprisingly asked the migrants to vacate Jammu. How could and why should then Hindus go back to Kashmir under these barbaric conditions and unless militancy is crushed there completely and anti India and anti Hindu elements are routed and eliminated totally? The migrants must be, however, given training in modern sophisticated arms and equipped fully before they return to Kashmir.

> During the course of an interview in Delhi, I frankly said that Kashmir had *"become a malignant spot in the body politic of the country. It is not a place for pro-India and nationalist elements now to live in ....Government of India has slept over the matters for decades, resulting in the present situation"*.[268]

The unfortunate stage has come when crisis of mutual confidence between people and people and between Kashmiris and Kashmiris has brewed up, owing to the militancy and its acompanying circumstances. It has left absolutely no scope for the migrants to go back unless the militancy and effects of the militantcy also are destroyed, damage done recompensed and confidence lost revived and restored by positive measures.

The Muslim government employees of Kashmir, numbering about 1.37 lakh, went on a long strike in Kashmir, first of its kind in the history of Kashmir. Their demands included reinstatement of 4 government officers dismissed on the ground of their alleged links with the militants and having indulged in subversive activities. They also demanded release of a Doctor who was arrested and detained for his alleged complicity with the militants. Their next demand was shifting of Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) Court from Jammu

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[268] *The Samachar Post, Delhi, January 16, 1991.*

to Srinagar.

These were all pro-militant and political demands raised by these striking employees. These demands and the strike by the employees was not only a prestigious point for the Central Government but also a challenge to the nation and to the country's authority. The employees were and are paying a monthly subscription to the militants, which amounts to a regular fund of lakhs of rupees for them. During the period of strike this fund was blocked and the Government also remained adamant and did not accede to any of the employee's demands nor agreed to negotiate the matter unless the strike was called off. The strike continued over two months, either side remaining rigid in their stand which, however, embarrassed and dejected the striking employees in general. They were at breaking point and the strike was about to collapse. Kashmiri "advisers" of the Prime Minister, however, did not want the employee's strike to fizzle out at the fag end which would have adversely affected the anti India movement and militancy in Kashmir. They prevailed upon Chander Shekhar and he succumbed, perhaps least realising that that would recoil on national interests and boost up the morale of the militants and their sympathisers and supporters among the striking employees. And the Government boosted them up, kept their spirits high and surrendered as usual before them.

Governor G.C. Saxena started negotiations on 71st day of the strike, with the leaders of striking employees, at the instance of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, who was guided by National Conference leaders and obsessed perhaps with the idea that he would be thereby nearer to solving the Kashmir crisis. He could not obviously realise the folly of his decision nor its impact. This attitude seemed more that of a trade Unionist than of the country's Prime Minister as if he was running a trade Union at his home town and the surrender might earn him dividents. He yielded as such. The Governor excluded the State Chief Secretary R.K. Takkar in the negotiations, who remained unwavered in his stand to take the strike to its logical end which had a bearing on the future of militants and their supporters in Kashmir. If the Central Government was so weak and captive of indecision why did it then take the extreme step to drag the employees to resort to such a long strike? The allegations could be even regarded then as false and the basis for the strike genuine. In either case the national interests were played with and the Government owed an explanation to the nation in this behalf. The confused government accepted in substance, all the demands of the striking employees, with full salary for the striking period and the strike was called off on 72 nd day. But for an aschute, sagacious and daring leader and Prime Minister with patriotic passion, the problems and issues in Kashmir or elsewhere in the country cannot be clinched, decided and settled once for all.

It gave a further lease of life and fillip to the militancy in Kashmir. After defeat of the Government on this point, the employees feel elated and think that they have an upper hand in the administration and precedence over the national interests. The result is that the position of Hindus, particularly of the migrants has become all the more precarious and tight.

These employees deliberately do not do even a bit of the migrants' work as government servants and choose to flout openly orders even of their superiors in this regard. They harass and torture the migrants by withholding their service record and information in Kashmir and create obstacles in the despatching of the money due. Striking employees drew and realised their entire salary and other dues only within three days but have adopted a pathetic and hostile attitude towards the migrants who have sadly been thrown out from the Valley. J & K Bank Ltd is no exception to it. The Muslim employees in general and other Muslims in particular enjoy the monopoly in Kashmir, in Jammu, in Delhi and elsewhere in the country, and the Hindus have been banished from the Valley of Kashmir and made to languish outside, away from their homes. Government of India mistakenly take migrants as "helpless mortgagees", and rejoice their pangs of pain and their unfathomable patience, which will prove some day too costly for them.

The government is reported to have been paying regular amounts monthly to the pony wallas, shikarawallas, House Boat wallas and some other classes of Muslims in Kashmir . Also they get easy loans. J & K State Financial Corporation is on the brink of bankruptcy by granting liberal loans to Kashmiri Muslims on government instructions, whereas the migrants have been discriminated against. The Central Government has gone out of its way in spending money in Kashmir and keeping alive militancy there. Without doing constructive or any other work in the Valley, the huge government funds are drawn and appropriated. The people are pampered and boosted economically too. To quote an instance, the participants and artists in Srinagar Doordarshan programmes (now all Muslims) are being paid for over a year past, three times more remuneration than they are entitled to and received before the start of militancy. Why this conscious discrimination is observed and perpetrated by the Central Government between Doordarshan Artists in Kashmir and outside Kashmir? This all helped to contribute to the crisis in the ranks of Government administration and in other Government institutions in Kashmir.

This type of special consideration is shown by the government towards those who could not align with India but are still reaping the harvest even under the current grim situation whereas those who stood by India in the Valley, are turned out from their land of birth. They could never avail of their ordinary rights of equality and survival in Kashmir as citizens of the place and the idea of special privileges and concessions was a far fetched one for them. What a contrast to the policies of the Government of India which incidently is bringing the country nearer to disintegration!

When a Muslim house or houses are gutted, whatever the reasons, these fire victims are paid adequate cash compensation on the spot by the Government. Thousands of migrant houses have been damaged, looted or burnt down in Kashmir Valley, whatever the cause, but not a single penny has so far been paid to these victims as cash compensation. Why? Are Kashmiri Hindus outcasts and aliens ? I sympathise with Kashmiri Muslims and I have all love and affection for them. I have maximum Muslim friends in whose welfare I have emotive involvement I do not grudge them being helped, befriended or benefited but I certainly detest the step motherly treatment accorded to the Hindus. This has created the worst type of crisis of administrative fairness which is having disastrous consequences.

Kashmiri Muslims are enjoying all privileges in India. In Delhi alone, about 1000 shops are run by them, which are mostly located in commercially important and costly areas. The government has allotted the shops to them in markets like Palika Bazaar. There is not a single Hotel of India Tourism Development Corporation in Delhi, where Kashmiri Muslims have not been allotted a number of business premises in the shopping arcades. In many such Government Undertaking Hotels, not one or two shops but several of them have been allotted to them in each Hotel, whereas not a single shop has ever been allotted to a Kashmiri Hindu. Has this allotment to Kashmiri Muslims any nexus with the ratio of the rest of the Delhi population? If not, and certainly it has no comparison with Delhi's own population, why then Muslims have been "showered" these benefits out of proportion and Kashmir Hindus have always been neglected and trampled over in all spheres of life in the Valley despite merit on pretext of being a miniscule minority?

Almost the same position is reportedly prevailing in other important ITDC Hotels in the country. Thousands of shops, whether allotted or acquired privately, are run by Kashmiri Muslims throughout the country. Not even half a dozen shops are run by Kashmiri Hindus in the whole country. The "Pheri Wallas" doing regular business in the country are also about 50 thousand in number who earn bread for their families constituting the strength of about 3 lakh members. Others connected with them by way of working on the raw materials and preparation or manufacture of the articles (artisans as they are called) sold in the country which account for providing livelihood to about 4 lakh people more. These all are Muslim beneficiaries and this number alone is more than the population of Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley.

Whenever some Kashmiri Hindus got employed in Kashmir in local branches of Banks (before and after nationalisation of Banks) or in any other Indian institution, undertaking or in the office of Central Government located in the Valley, exclusively on considerations of merit and suitability, Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah and other Muslim leaders used to burst out and accuse the concerned Institutions and the Central Government of meting out discriminatory treatment to Muslims and condemned them for recruitment of Kashmiri Pandits. They would conveniently suppress the facts like above and that in a very important organisation like Defence alone, thousands of Kashmiri Muslims, most of them illiterate or semiliterate have been absorbed in civil jobs in MES and other wings of the Army in the Valley since long, drawing more benefits and emoluments than they could earn if at all they had been recruited in the State service. As against this, only a few hundred Kashmiri Hindus have been recruited on civil posts of the Army in the Valley.

In Khadi and Village Industries Commission (Central Commission) a large number of Muslims is benefited and draw their maintainance in the Valley as against about two dozen Hindus. The funny thing is that a number of them claimed benefits of gratuity etc., unreasonably though, prior to the period of partition of India (1947) when the commission had not at all come into existence. This strange plea taken by these wage earners was that during those old days they were working in some "Khadi Bhandar" as such, they deserved benefits from that period. And the Presiding Officers of Labour Courts(Asstt. Labour Commissioner etc.) used to summon the State Director and other Officers of the Commission for personal appearance in their offices in such cases also, in order to overawe them into submission in presence of the hooting and hostile group of workers. Khadi & Village Industries Commission has been accommodating these and other workers to a great extent but whenever the question of payment to a Hindu comes, they avoid and withhold it.

Struggling for fixation in service here and there had invoked wrath against Kashmiri Hindus and unnecessarily enraged Muslim leaders who virtually used to campaign to throttle them up and launch a crusade against India.

This all created a piquant situation. More often than not, Kashmiri Hindus were implicitly denied the right to existence. "Land to tiller" hit them the most, as majority of them were petty land owners in the Valley and the lands were snatched from them under the Agrarian Reforms Acts and transferred to their Muslim tenants. Being a progressive measure for social justice, it could not be objected to or fought against. But Hindus could not get State service on the basis of competition, merit and suitablility, in view of the open and clear Government policy against them (except in a small number) as they were small in number. They could not get Central Government employment and that of its Undertakings either, Banks and other institutions in adequate number even on merit, due to opposition by Muslim leaders (some of whom always claimed to be nationalist leaders) and the policy of Central Government. For business, shops would neither be allotted to them in Kashmir or outside, nor encouragement and facilities provided to them. Orchards were not touched, for, there is an overwhelming number of Muslim orchardists in Kashmir. It was, therefore, no fun in bringing the orchards within the purview of Agrarian Reforms Act. It could cause no substantial loss and damage to Hindus and no corresponding gain and benefit to Muslims, as was calculated and achieved in the case of "Land to Tiller". When their own skin is touched, the Muslim leaders in Kashmir do not bother for "have nots" and down trodden and prefer to remain and act as capitalists and imperialists.

Not to speak of Kashmiri Muslim leaders only, but even national leaders like George Fernandez could see no wrong in Kashmir except that Kashmiri Pandits had monopolised the services in Government offices and Government Undertakings. During the Janata Dal regime, when he was Minister in charge of Kashmir Affairs, Fernandez exposed them to further danger as well as to wrath and killings that the militants had already embarked upon. By attributing a lion's share to them in the services, Kashmiri Pandits ran an additional risk of life and property. According to Fernandez the alleged service monopoly of Kashmiri Pandit was a problem and had also become a cause for militancy. Not that he exagerated the matter, but he had shown total ignorance about the situation.

> In response to an invitation from George Fernandez to attend a 3 day "Lohia Mela" at Akbarpur (U.P.) and to celebrate his birthday there beginning from March 23, 1991, I sent him a reply and declined his invitation in protest. I reserved option to release the letter to the Press, which I did later. This letter inter alia reads: *"Your notions are morbid and parochial which go counter to socialist thought and working. In the previous Janata Dal Government, you made a sweeping and reckless reference about Kashmiri Pandits, when you were Minister in charge of Kashmir Affairs. You were perhaps not satisfied, nor the Janata Dal regime, with the killings of innocent Kashmiri Hindus by the terrorists, and their forcible exodus from the Valley, as you sought to create further schism between the oppressed and the oppressor by your inept and inopportune remarks about Kashmiri Pandits .... You seemed to be quite unaware about the Kashmir affairs and the long sufferings and persecutions endured by Kashmiri Pandits. The Indian leadership of whatever hue and colour it is, by and large, believed always in supporting and appeasing the secessionists and the terrorists and curbing and crushing the pro-accessionists in Kashmir. Unless this policy and thinking is reversed, the country will have to see more bad days in the future."* [269]

The Muslim leadership and the State Government has left no scope for Hindus to live in the Valley . Crisis of justice, equality and equity has been created and maintained. Their land and bread has been snatched. They are denied employment even on the basis of merit and suitability. Facilities and encouragement to them in the field of trade and business are not forthcoming. When some one among them, like Prem Nath Bazaz pleaded for Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan, he was

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269. The Samachar Post, Delhi, April 28, 1991.

shot at by Muslim activists of National Conference. He was arrested and detained in Jail for his views when National Conference came to power after Kashmir's Accession to India. Many other Kashmiri Pandit young-men also suffered long detentions and tribulations after Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference assumed power in 1947, for holding similar views and favouring Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan. When some one amongst the Kashmiri Hindus or a person not less than the position of Ram Chandra Kak, advocated for "Independent Kashmir", he was after Accession manhandled, humiliated, arrested and detained for his views on political status of Kashmir as mentioned in earlier pages. And when Sheikh Abdullah proved a turn coat in 1953 and betrayed Jawahar Lal Nehru, preached view s similar to those of Kak, the Sheikh was hailed as a hero by a large section of Kashmiri Muslims but not Ram Chandra Kak, members of whose community have always been mortified. They are required to dance to the ever changing tunes and whims of Muslim leaders and are left hardly with any option. What a mockery !

If Hindus in Kashmir toed the line of Accession to India which was endorsed by Sheikh Abdullah himself and his National Conference joined in bulk the pro-India procession that was taken out in Srinagar in August, 1953, nobody should have been annoyed, nor their continuing as unwavered pro-Accession and pro-Indians should be an irritant to any one, nor to militants now, who inflict inhuman tortures and killings on them. If a Kashmiri Hindu says "Pakistan", he is crushed; if he says "Independent Kashmir", he is still crushed; if he says"India", he is yet crushed; and if he says nothing, he is even then crushed, killed and ousted!

When Kashmiri Muslims and their leadership changed their political stands and resiled from their committed decisions every now and then, they are hailed by Muslims and appeased by the Government. How the literate Hindu minority of Kashmir is expected to oscillate like the Muslim leadership? Why should they become turn coat and endorse their ever changing and varying, conflicting and contradictory stands, at different points of time? If any Hindu pleaded for the same view earlier, he was penalised and his stand was opposed strongly, but Muslims in general want to have the entire monopoly, even liberty to vacillate and to reverse the historical decisions at their own whim and caprice, even though a heavy price may be paid for it. After the Muslim leadership used to take the same stand, they were hailed as heroes and the Hindus condemned as agents and traitors by the same leaders and by the same people.

Who is then the traitor and who is the agent and of whom? Is there any end to these mockeries which in each case boil down ultimately to stifling the throat of Hindus in general and shutting up the mouth of nationalist and emancipated Muslims in particular. I have also fought for freedom of expression, freedom of press and for freedom of other civil liberties of Kashmiris(the details not given here). How the situation created in the wake of robbery of these liberties by a group or groups with the aid of gun, can be reconciled to, by such people, and acquiesce to their inhuman acts and deeds? The voice of armless dissenting people cannot be crushed every time nor can they be silenced for all times to come. The rumour mongering trait coupled with irresolute ideas and fickle mindedness, displayed at various occasions under the guidance of stumbling leadership, may bring some support here and there but it cannot be a lasting phenomenon.

Initially, some groups of militants had shown remarkable character and adherence to the public cause. While they wanted to do away with the use of any sort of intoxications, they stopped, as such, sale and purchase of liquor (now cigarettes also have been banned) controlled exuberant rates and spiralling prices of essentials of life in the general market, which gained some public sympathy for them and the poor people had begun to heave a sigh of relief. But it was not to last long, nor the sincerity that they had started it with.

Once a group of militants asked a Hindu family in Palhalan to keep dinner ready for them and they would be coming in the evening for the same. They prepared the meals for them without mutton as the same was not available at that late time. The militants came to have dinner but refused to take it on the plea that no meat was prepared. This family expressed that mutton was not available at the late hour, as such, the vegetables and eggs were prepared for them. The militants asked them to prepare the beef as this family was having a calf which the militants slaughtered. They cooked beef for them and ran away early the next morning from their house and migrated to a place outside the Valley, as the family could not put up with the mental shock of cooking beef. The religious susceptibilities were hurt in another case also but in a more crude form.

Cow slaughtering and the sale of beef is prohibited in Kashmir under the State law and violation thereof is a punishable offence. To hurt the Hindu feelings and invest Kashmir with Islamic texture, the cow slaughtering has become an open and normal feature in the Valley now and the offence is committed with impunity which is getting in vogue for long past.

Sharp contradictions reportedly appeared in the professions and practices of the militants. Many of the militants themselves indulged in drinking. Mohd. Ayub, a militant from Kashmir, had gone to Calcutta to collect money from the Kashmiri businessmen who go to Calcutta in winter. He died in Calcutta allegedly due to consumption of heavy dose of liquor.

The Raina's house, built by sons of Damodar Raina at Natipora, Srinagar, was lying vacant, like thousands of other Kashmiri Pandit houses as the occupants had migrated out of the Valley. It was converted by some militants, like so many other Hindu houses, into their hideout and was reportedly used, among other things, for bringing girls there and committing rape on them. It was also a den of the militants for consumption of liquor. In the month of October 1990, the owners of the house arranged for the police security and went to their house to take out some precious and badly required movable household property out of the valley in presence of the security personnel.

When they entered the house, they and the security men were shocked to find two young girls, (probably Muslims as one of the owners told me), lying dead in semi nude posture. The girls were believed to have been killed ruthlessly after having being used for sexual purposes. Their tattered clothes and bodies were blood stained and bruised. These and similar other victims have not been the daughters of any Minister or high ups, they are our daughters, daughters of common Kashmiris, Kashmir's innocent and helpless daughters who met this inhuman and brutal fate. When the security forces try to save them, a hue and cry of "police excess" is raised and deliberately too. But these "excesses" committed against Kashmiris and humanity by Muslim militants themselves supported by Afghan and Pakistani army in plain clothes, are never noticed, kept in mind and wailed and condemned by any element, group or Party. How our beautiful homeland - Kashmir has been ruined by the militants aided by Pakistan and some other countries!

This was not all of that gruesome scene witnessed by the entrants to the house. They also saw human blood spattered over various places in the entire house. Who knows how many cruelties have been committed there and the modesty of how many innocent girls of Kashmir has been violated forcibly and human blood made to shed inhumanly? Various writings in Urdu were found inscribed with blood on different walls of the house. In addition thereto, the house was replete with empty bottles of whisky. With the help of police, the owners cleansed the house and ran away with important belongings under the spell of fear and shock. In December 1990, the police informed the migrant owners of the above house at Jammu that their house was sealed.

The house of late Janki Nath Safaya, at Babapora Srinagar, has one underground room. Like many other Hindu houses, this deserted house of the migrants has also been used by the militants. When the landlords went to their house with the help of the security personnel to evacuate some necessary articles, they found the underground room emitting bad smell. On their entry into this room, they saw a number of iron electric presses, stained with blood, lying scattered there. Night soil, urine and blood dots were visible on the floor of the room. The room appeared to have been used for investigation of the captives, during which brutality must have been committed on the helpless victims. By applying hot presses to their naked bodies, their skin must have been burning, blood oozing out and urine and tools involuntarily passed under extreme torture, fear, horror, pain and agony. The investigation centres of militants were also in the countryside and the jungles.

The abnormal conditions in Kashmir, unprecedented and unparalleled, have created crisis of human values and norms. The human behaviour of civility has been replaced by unscrupulous gun culture which has adversely affected the social life of Kashmiris. To reform the society and to bring it to its normal position by normal and routine manner and method is almost impossible. It calls for strict and stringent as also offensive and punitive measures, commensurate with the gravity of the situation, to settle the dust of horror and terrorism, or else militancy will survive and linger on.

> *"An immediate question that the Indian government may have to decide is about how far we follow the policy of rooting out the terrorist and subversive elements in Kashmir - and Punjab - and whether an Israel - like approach of attacking the training camps for subversives which undoubtedly exist both in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and in Pakistani Punjab is to be attempted."* [270]

Commemorating the first death anniversary of Ashfaq Majid, Chief of a militant outfit, on March 30, 1991 a procession of some hundred armed militants, including many armed girls, all with faces covered, was taken out in the city of Srinagar, from the civil lines (Maisuma) to Iddgah, the place of his burial. They covered this long distance in the city uninterrupted on foot. Security forces looked as helpless spectators. Seditious speeches were made before the large Muslim congregation at Iddgah. After conclusion of the function, no militant, male or female, could be arrested by the security forces, though they wanted to nab them at different exit route points.Such is the position in Kashmir which is concealed by the Central Government from the people of India.

For launching consistent anti India armed activities in the Valley of Kashmir, the then JKLF Chief Mohamad Maqbool Bhat used to cross the border over to Indian side of Kashmir alongwith some of his colleagues. Their activities were mostly confined to districts of Kupwara and Baramulla. They used to indulge in loot and violence. More than 1 lakh rupees were snatched from a branch of Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd. A local CID officer Amer Chand was murdered by them in Langet area, for watching and reporting their activities whenever they crossed over to this side of Kashmir in seventies. For this act of militancy, they were put on trial and Sessions Judge awarded death sentence to Maqbool Bhat. But his death sentence was not carried out for a long period and he remained confined to Tehar Jail, Delhi. He was, however, executed [271] in 1984 after an Indian diplomat

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270. The Janata Weekly Bombay, May 6, 1990.

271. *Mr. Mohd. Maqbool Bhat, a native of village Trehgam, Kupwara was living in Pakistan. PUCL passed a resolution in Srinagar for setting him at liberty which was moved by People's Conference member and Convenor of PUCL Kashmir branch, Mr. B.A. Khan (now Mr. Justice B.A. Khan). The author was one of the founder members of PUCL in Kashmir Valley. He was among the signitories to this resolution along with some non-local Correspondents of the national press, posted as they were then in Srinagar who were co-opted by the Convenor. The author has however, severed his connections with PUCL for its negative role and campaign of disinformation about Kashmir.*

Ravindra Mathare of Bombay was killed in London by JKLF men.

It was politics and not welfare of the people, which every political party gave priority and precedence to. Disenchanted with the government, people were, therefore, apt to be misled and suffer untold miseries. People's Citizen Council came in, on non-party and on non-political basis, to bridge the gulf and create a rapport between people and the government in order to seek redressal of public grievances. It tried to neutralise the augmenting discontent among the people which was apprehended to shape badly for both, public as well as the Government. Communal amity and welfare of the people was a major aim of this Council and it did some commendable activities. But due to uncontrolled militancy, it had also to suspend its activities.[272]

Soft options have failed to work in Kashmir. Only firm and stiff handling of the situation as well as counter terrorism and guerrilla tactics will meet the menace and challenge of militancy. It also needs demolition of training camps of the militants as also destruction of all channels of ammunition supply. Ex service men must be given subsidy and all necessary facilities to settle with families in large numbers along the borders to plug the routes of infiltration. Slackness in this regard will prolong and perpetuate the agony of Kashmiris. Those holding power in New Delhi have been and are responsible for dampening the spirits of security forces in dealing with the situation!

How shameful is it that the authority incharge of the para-military forces, should have itself campaigned against them and curbed them under the cover of "excesses"! It was no other person than Janata Dal Home Minister, Mufti Syed who spoke against para-military forces for the alleged "excesses" while addressing a meeting at Doda (Jammu) in July, 1990. Strangely enough, he held the Home portfolio and at the same time maligned it. He arranged a meeting of State Janata Dal office bearers with his Prime Minister V. P. Singh (the author was not invited

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272. *People's Citizen Council provided a common platform to members of some political and non-political parties for ventilating public grievances on non-political basis and seeking redressal of the same. Mr. PoshkenNath Koul Vakil is the founder Convenor of this Council. . Some of the persons who associated with its activities at various points of time, are S/Shri Mufti Azam Basheer-ud-Din, Mohamed Amin Pandit, Mohamed Iqbal Chapri, Noor-ud-Din Pandit (Awami Forum), Ghulam Nabi Hagroo(Jamait-i-Islami), Tika Lal Tapiloo (BJP), Mohd. Yousuf Chapri (Dal Development Union), H.N. Wanchoo (Trade Unionist C.P.I), Pervez (C.P.I.) Mohd. Amin Butch, Ghulam Ahmed Batkhoo (House Boat Union), Abdul Samad Kotru (House Boat Union), Mohd. Yaqub Vakil(Awami Action Committee), Mohd.Syed Tramboo (Hotel Owners Association) Ghulam Ahmad. Koul, Master Faqir Singh (Akali Dal), Lakhbir Singh, Ghulam Rasool Bhat (Traders & Manufacturers Association) Abdul Salam Baba (Kiryana Traders Association) Ghulam Rasool Bhat(Janata Dal) Fida Mohd. Hussainan, Shadilal Shali, Dr. Abdul Ahad, Ghulam Mohamad Mir, Kamlaish Vakil, Jamil Shaheen , Sushil Vakil and the author.*

though he was an office bearer) to discuss the prevailing situation in Kashmir. The Home Minister persuaded and tutored these "yes-men" of the party to tell the Prime Minister that the situation in Kashmir was worsening due to the "excesses" committed by the para-military forces and that they should be called off and stopped from using arms. Was the Home Minister keeping his Prime Minister in dark and acting against the national interests? Why did the Home Minister not resign if he was sure and sincere in his belief and utterances ? Mufti also picked up some non-party Muslim members, from Kashmir House, New-Delhi (which has been converted into a centre for Kashmir militants) to tell the same thing to the Prime Minister, as party "activists" from Kashmir, who were fake "partymen". Kashmir House has become a safe hideout for many visiting militants in Delhi. Kashmiri staff is harbouring them as they have monopolised the allotment of accommodation there. It is one of the main reasons that the Kashmiri staff opposed to the deputation of non Kashmiri security personnel there and production of their identity cards to them on demand. In order to defeat this precautionary measure, they pleaded for withdrawal of these orders and went in for strike and the Government yielded to their demands.

Obviously, therefore, the security forces have been rendered almost helpless in Kashmir. They could not defend themselves and fire even in self protection unless they are actually fired upon by the militants. These are the secret instructions to them. In other words it meant that unless any member or a group of security forces actually got killed or injured by the militants, they could not take any precautionary and defensive measure. Whenever any member of the security force apprehended danger and fired a shot, he was punished for, and sent to the quarter-guard. The result is that the security forces are under restraint to take full interest in crushing the militancy and in many cases, forced as they were, overlooked the activities of the militants. By their compulsive inaction, a large number of security forces are dying in Kashmir regularly and their exact numbers are always being suppressed by the government and only a nominal figure is reportedly made public.

This has all the more encouraged the militants who take it as a sign of weakness on the part of government. A Hindu postman of Baramulla, named Hirday Nath perhaps had stuck to his duty there. He was caught by a militant one day who accused him of reading public letters. The postman denied the allegation and expressed that he had devoted his life to discharge of his duty honestly for all the decades he had been serving in the postal department. The militant sought an excuse and added, if he had no interest why did he stay back in Kashmir and didnot migrate. The militant, therefore, took out his pistol to fire at him. The stout postman caught hold of the militant's hand and did not allow him to fire. The scuffle ensued within the sight of a group of security personnel, posted on duty close by. Other locals were also watching the scene. The postman cried for help, "Bachaw, bachaw" but nobody came forward to help and save him. Other militants meanwhile, came to the rescue of the fighting militant and fired from point blank range at the postman, killing him on the spot. It all happened under the protective nose of the para military forces.

After a while, when he had parted company with some Muslims, with whom he was witnessing this merciless assassination of the postman, a Sikh gentleman quietly and stealthly went to the security forces stationed there. He in confidence asked them why did they not help the postman when he cried for help and was killed in their presence without getting any protection? He further asked them why they did not fire at the militants in order to save the innocent victim? The security personnel expressed their helplessness. They felt that they could not help him, for, they were stripped off their powers. They could not rescue him and fire at the militants on their own. Had the militants fired at them, they explained, then alone they could exchange fire with the militants, otherwise they could not. In case, they further explained to him, they had fired at the militants under the circumstances, they would have been punished and placed under quarter-guard. As such, they first have to think of themselves and then alone they can save any other person.

The security forces were not, therefore, allowed to help and save innocent citizens. The Indian Peace Keeping Force could go to Sri Lanka and kill Tamil militants in attempt to crush militancy and achieve peace there, but at home in Kashmir, New Delhi would not allow its security forces to deal with the situation freely and to save and rescue the innocent people as also to flush out and finish the ultras and their supporters and sympathisers. What a contrast in policies of the Central Government and a pity on its fragility! It has, together with other factors, created a crisis of trust. Faith is lacking in the efficacy of New-Delhi to handle the situation in Kashmir properly and sternly.

Can a sense of security be created and inculcated in the minds of migrants in the manner the Central Government functions and behaves viz-a-viz Kashmir? Then for whom this all drill and dance and exercise of yielding and appeasement, spending and lending huge amounts of money, has been embarked upon. The singularly unique and unparalleled "situation" of Kashmir cannot be countenanced any longer. If Central Government could not retain Kashmir when migrants were there, it can not be retained when they are not there.

The depth of the crisis can be gouged by the fact that not a single lawyer from Kashmir Valley came forward or accepted the offers to represent the government or any government department in the courts located in the Valley of Kashmir. This sad state of affairs continues even now. I might have prevailed upon my colleagues in this behalf but I did not like to take any initiative and responsibility in view of the vacillating attitude of the Central Government.

The different offices and functionaries of Central Government even in

Delhi, dampen the spirits of the migrants in different walks of life and spheres of activities, by advancing pretext of rules, regulations or procedures. Even if the rules are, for instance correct, how do they relax them or do a formality in a malafide manner to appease Kashmiri Muslims and be relentless and strict in case of migrants. Hindus are discriminated against and insult is added to their injury. All that the Central Government has been doing is defying secularism, promoting Muslim fundamentalism and secessionism. The government has been playing a partisan role in keeping alive the present horrible "situation" in Kashmir.

A deep rooted crisis for secularism has, therefore, come up which might dissuade migrants even in future to go back to Kashmir and to resettle there. Innumerable Hindus have already lost their houses and belongings, jobs and services. What is now left there for them to fall back upon? There is no guarantee and security for their honour, life and property.

The Governor's rule followed by the President's rule is meaningful only if the situation is dealt with an iron hand and the requisite measures, howsoever unpleasant, are taken to root out the ailment and its germs, so as to forestall and banish the chance of recurrence of the bloody disease in future. Failing this, the Governor's or President's rule is neither desirable nor a solution to the rapid growth of this malignant disease. The Central Government and equally so the Governor, appear to cherish the plight of the people, particularly that of the migrants and seek to perpetuate the same without remedying the malady, perhaps for having no guts or capacity to do the needful. They have no right at the same time, to place the migrants in a forced state of languish and to "relish"their agony without taking requisite steps for hasty liquidation of militancy and rehabilitation of the migrants. The government needs to admit its failure and wash its hands off forthwith, before committing further grave lapses and defaults, incurring more adverse verdicts of the history and accumulating punitive retribution for the lapses.

An acute type of constitutional crisis has developed in Kashmir. Break down of the constitutional machinery is witnessed for long now. The Governor with his Advisors, ineffective as they have proved, seem to have come on a pleasure trip to Kashmir, unmindful of the woes and wounds of Kashmiris. They have neither been able to streamlime the administration, nor do they take due interest in the administration, nor pay heed to the public grievances which do not find any channel for expression and redressal. They are not accessible to public as Governor Jag Mohan was, who had stamina and innate desire to look and attend to the public grievances and complaints and to remedy the same. Their bureaucratic attitude and approach is incompatable with the requirements of the situation which has augmented miseries of people in general and of migrants in particular.

Deterioration in conditions is accelerating, constitutional impasse deepening and political malaise perpetuating. Constitutional machienery can be put back into gear only after perfect normalcy is restored. In attempt to install a popular Government, it is not advisable to thrust power on those who have already tasted it. A new team of political activists must be encouraged to come forward to shoulder the responsibility of forming and running the Government. A good number of Muslim young men are already in the Valley, who vouch for India and were always prepared to serve both, India and the people of Kashmir, but were ignored and neglected. Their services may still be availed of. They need to be tamed. With their help a regulated popular Government can be inducted and a purposeful democratic set up established for betterment of the people.

With no let up in militancy, the situation in Kashmir is extremely grave, disturbing and unprecedented. It has reached a stage that one and all will have heavily to pay for. Some have borne the brunt, others have yet to taste it with all its bitterness. It has not come about within a short period as some mistakenly think. A series of "crises" had developed, stretching over a long period that culminated in the present grave crisis. What has been sown and cultivated all through, has blossomed forth and became now ripe to reap. Union Governments at different points of time, deferred the matters and tried to find out a piece-meal solution whenever circumstances compelled them to face an alarming situation. Their approach has purely been on the lines to suggest "*after me deluge*". The "deluge" had to come some day and it came.

The situation is baffling, defying apparently a peaceful and a workable solution. It is confusion at its worst, confounded with helplessness of the government and faithlessness of the people in the government. What this crisis is all about? Is it that Kashmiris really want "Azadi." If so, independence from what? Kashmiris have been more independent and more free than the people of Pakistan or of so called "Azad Kashmir". Pakistan has been yearning under military junta for a major period of her life. Pakistan Government has yet to pick up threads of democracy and to stand the ordeal of civilised human behaviour and to give Pakistanis what is called the civil rule of the people. Exploitation of "Kashmir" cannot form basis and foundations of democracy for a foreign country, however close neighbour she might be.

Pakistan occupied Kashmir, (so called Azad Kashmir) has yet to come out from the marsh of backwardness. Suffering from economic distress and appalling conditions, about ten lakh of its population is roaming about in England, Gulf countries and other parts of the world, for avoiding starvation and earning livelihood. People of Indian Kashmir are free politically, emancipated economically and independent religiously. Indian democracy has given Kashmiris all that is worthwhile which Pakistan has not been able to give to "Azad Kashmiris".

True "Azad Kashmiris" are a dejected and frustrated lot and they have risen in revolt against Pakistan under the banner of "Jammu and Kashmir Liberation

Front"(JKLF) and other parties in order to get basic human rights and amenities and to fight out deplorable conditions and economic stalemate. The war, as such, should have been started there against Pakistan and not in Indian Kashmir, the people wherein are admittedly far far better off and advanced in all respects than the people in Pakistan held Kashmir are. Pakistan occupied Kashmir should have been liberated first, if at all it is a mass struggle for independence; or Pakistan should have declared and made that part really independent, if she is verily so keen and interested for independence of Kashmir. Pakistan is obviously, neither interested in Kashmiris nor in their "independence". What she really is interested about is her own interests and fundamentalism, to grab this part of Kashmir also forcibly and illegally. This is political and religious exploitation of the situation by Pakistani Government which is flagrantly violating international laws and openly interfering with internal matters of India in Kashmir.

Pakistan Government does not apparently like to see Kashmiris in affluent positions and want to reduce them obviously, to the abject position of "Azad Kashmiris". The logic is that the trouble against the government must start from and thrive in the backward part and not in an advanced area. If it is otherwise, as in the instant case, then the ground for trouble and militancy is something else which is kept hidden from the public eye.

Is it really for vindication of "Kashmiriat" that the current terrorism in Kashmir is going on? Its reply should be in negative. JKLF was founded and operated in Pakistan. It is a non-Kashmiri organisation. The areas of Pakistan occupied Kashmir are totally non-Kashmiri speaking areas and its population is also totally different and distinct from Kashmiris. They constitute a separate ethnic group from that of Kashmiris. The people of so called "Azad Kashmir" have no nearness and simlilarity with the Muslims of Indian Kashmir, except that both are Muslims. They differ with each other culturally and linguistically. Pakistan sponsored militancy in Kashmir is not, therefore, for the love of "Kashmiriat" either.

Many Kashmiri Muslim girls were lured to cross over to Pakistan to receive training in militancy. Their trainers and others connected with this adventurism, showed these girls their full "sympathy" by sexually assaulting them. A large number of such unmarried girls have reportedly conceived and most of them have been retained in Pakistan. It is also one of the reasons that many Muslim families migrated from Kashmir to Jammu and other parts of the country. They want to save themselves and their honour and spare their daughters and sisters from likely threat of mortification in the prevailing conditions.

Be it as it may, the real Kashmir movement could not exclude the Kashmiri Hindus from its purview. For, they are the essential component of Kashmiris and "Kashmiriat" with a long long history as original inhabitants of Kashmir. The militancy in Kashmir is basically founded on religious fundamentalism and fanaticism and not on the basis of "Kashmiriat".. As a result thereof, the series of killings made in the initial stage of the militancy, were that of Kashmiri Hindus except one Mohd. Yousuf Halwai. One of the militants , Farooq Ahmed Dar (known as Bitta Karatay, now in detension) has openly claimed to have killed about twenty Kashmiri Hindus singly at different places. This was the trend and also rate of killing members of small Hindu minority of Kashmir in the beginning which was the highest in ratio of population. Obviously, therefore, it was at no point, the struggle for Kashmiriat or for liberation of Kashmir. It is not at all outburst of Kashmiri subnationalism, nor does it attune to the urges of Kashmiri sub-nationalism. In fact, this violent Muslim adventurism suffers for want of "Kashmiriat" and has created the crisis of Kashmiriat. The tragedy of Pakistan supported militancy in Kashmir is that it axed the very roots of "Kashmiriat". Howsoever Kashmiri it may be sought to appear in "form" but in "substance" it is anti Kashmiri and "Kashmiriat" has been its first casualty.

What is it then? The reply is not far to seek. It is Muslim fanaticism prompted by political terrorism. It is two pronged attack with double jeopardy. Elimination of Hindus and obliteration of Hindu culture and remnants of their history in Kashmir as well as separation from India. It is a part of escalating Muslim fundamentalism world over. When it is so, it no longer remains a localised affair. It is, therefore, a terrorist movement against "Kashmiriat" but in favour of universal muslim fundamentalism and not for Kashmirism. Obviously, it is a crusade for ushering Kashmir to Islamic rule. It cannot be, therefore, a rule of Kashmiri brotherhood, but imposition of Nizam-e-Mustaffa, a more strict and stringent Islamic rule than is prevalent in Pakistan, though it is an exploitation of "means", to achieve the sinister political "end".

The current militancy is also a result of lack of leadership in the Valley. In fact the leadership patronised militancy initially in order to defeat the Indian interests in Kashmir. Pakistan, however, played a trick and organised numberless militant groups. The situation, therefore, went out of control as the numerous other militant outfits were never under the influence of Kashmir leadership. It was, as such, a crisis of leadership that the militants had a field day and a free hand. The leadership matching the situation was no longer there. The militants finished whatever leadership other than Dr. Farooq Abdullah was left behind or was availabe in Kashmir. That explains the murder of Moulvi Farooq. They did not spare even aged Maulana Masoodi. Moulvi Farooq was apprenhesive of assassination at the hands of the militants and, therefore, wanted to be arrested and detained by the government like some other leaders. He was neither prepared to displease the militants by accepting the security guard from the government, nor wanted to be kept in the jail where the militants were detained. He wanted to be detained in special jail at Kud where Sheikh Abdullah used to be detained generally whenever arrrested since 1953 A.D. But there was no formal request to the government to this effect from Moulvi Farooq himself which he avoided to make. Moulvi 's men, however, sounded the then Union Home Minister in this regard, but the latter did not like to make the former a hero and a potential political rival for himself. He, therefore, did not oblige them.

By finishing or discarding the leadership whatever was or is available, the militants have an upper hand. Many unlettered and uncouth elements of the society have now openly taken to militancy and they rule the roost. From notoriety, many of them, have come to occupy the place of respectability and position of command. .From zero they have become heroes and enjoy affluency with sexual delirium being no exception. They collect huge funds, enjoy a luxurious life and commit open rapes without suffering any punitive restraints. If militancy is crushed, the militants, would be at a great loss. They will be stripped off all this glamour and pleasure. How can they afford to lose all this? They will, as such, never wish the militancy to come to a halt and the present state of affairs to come to an end.

The crisis of effective leadership, therefore, gave free play to the militants and their militancy. They would not allow or like any sort of old leadership to be survived or would not permit growth of any new leadership in Kashmir, as that would be harmful for their purpose and personal ends, though helpful for the state. They have their own axe to grind. The welfare of the State and the people is not in their estimation.

The migrants no longer want to remain and live in a state of drift and suspense. Dissatisfied with the Central Government as always they have been, they want finalisation and settlement of the matters. Kashmiri Hindus cannot be driven like a herd of cattle. They have their own independent thinking. They are compelled to think in various terms for their future settlement. A section of the migrants, though a very small one, is of the opinion that they should go back to Kashmir and convert to Islam. They would as a matter of right then get precedence as members of Muslim community for absorption in services and other avenues of livelihood and will thus escape the torture of discrimination and persecution. They also argue that by conversion, they will cease to live under the fear of constant threat to their honour, life and property and would be in a position to lead life free from mental agony. Apprehension of liquidation will, in that event, be no longer a consideration for them. They would thereby avenge the Government of India whose negligence, apathy and ill advised policies landed them into present shameful and sorry state of affairs.

Another section of the migrants is of the opinion that they should return to the Valley and forge an alliance and understanding with the Muslim community and declare support for and sympathy with the militants and their cause and work for secession of Kashmir from India. Another view is that they should approach a suitable foreign country to allow them rehabilitation there, preferably Nepal, Mauritius, USA or Israel.

The main and dominating opinion, which the bulk of migrants hold tenaciously, is, however, to fight for Kashmir's total and final integration with India and to combat all anti India, anti Hindu and secessionist elements by awakening Indian public opinion and with the support of Indian masses. They say that they are in no case prepared to betray India, nor are prepared to surrender before the hostile Central Government or before the militants. They would not leave Kashmir like this and after bringing it at par with their line of thinking, they would go back to settle in Kashmir again.

As the Government of India has failed in Kashmir and crisis of religious tolerance has deepened, the migrants have to contrive planning about their future. It naturally raises few questions and their tasks may become easy to accomplish, in case the Indian nation comes to their rescue. It may also provides explicit answer to the questions coming up.

Some issues, therefore, arise naturally and Government of India is for instance, asked in view of failure of its Kashmir policy, if there was any, to treat the migrants as refugees and pay them full compensation for their properties left over by them in Kashmir. In the alternative to take all the necessary steps, even unpleasant and drastic, to crush the militancy in Kashmir and restore complete law and order and create a congenial atmosphere and conditions enabling migrants to go back to Kashmir honourably. It is also demanded that the culprits guilty of kidnapings and/or killings during the period of militancy alongwith the abettors, must be immediately and adequately punished for. Necessary legal and other steps be taken to set up Military Courts for trial of all such cases, disposing off each case within one week. Whosoever found guilty be awarded the capital punishment and innocents suffering detention, be set at liberty without losing time. Neither the "royal guest" treatment, nor unnecessary harassment and detention is fair and proper.

Farooq Ahamed Dar, alias Bitta Karatay, a militant in detention now, was once shown on T.V. during a national programme, confessed openly that he alone had killed about 20 Hindus in Kashmir. Government of India owes an explanation to the nation as to why was he not put on trial so far and released if he was innocent, instead making him a guest of the government and punished, if he was guilty, instead of being a constant irritant to the kith and kin of all those victims he claimed to have murdered. The benefit of "Fundamental Rights" as enshrined in the Constitution of India, can be taken by a citizen of India alone and not by an alien. The strangers and non-citizens cannot derive any advantage under these rights, nor can resort to the courts of law, directly or through kins and friends, to claim and seek any relief under these rights. The moment one indulges in hostile activities and pleads for secession simply or takes to militancy for the purpose, then one ceases to be a citizen of the country, and stands debarred automatically and ipso facto from invoking the jurisdiction of the courts and claiming any relief under these special rights. Such persons cannot have "both ways". On the one hand, they repudiated and denied Indian citizenship and rose to armed insurgency and on the other, fundamental rights are relied upon by them as citizens of the country and the government bestow them indulgence as also they move courts of law to seek the necessary relief, which such persons are not entitled to claim and seek relief thereunder.

Taking of necessary steps has become all the more necessary to banish the fear and threat and restore confidence among the innocent and suffering public in the Valley by displaying efficacious existence of lawful authority and sovereignity, meant to protect the common people. It will lend hope and succour to the innocent and suffering Muslims and other law abiding citizens in the Valley and migrants outside, who are helplessly groaning because of abnormalcy and ineffectiveness of the Central Government.

The people of the country are specifically asked two questions: whether they treat Kashmir as integral and inseparable part of India and wish to see Kashmir at par with any other state of India and whether they regard the migrants as Indians, thus forming a vital part of Indian society? If they feel sincerely and positively that they are and also that Kashmir is an inalienable limb of India, they will have to discharge their duty, howsoever onerous that might be. It will be a great guarantee for survival and safety of the migrants which in turn will help hold India together, or else the disintegration of the country is not far off. At the same time the Central Government is also called upon to make public its policy regarding Kashmir and migrants immediately. For any slackness and lapse, the concerned authorities of the Government deserve publicly to be indicted and punished in a manner to serve as a deterrent for future.

(*Continued from front flap*)

Mr. Pyarelal Kaul has not adhered to the politics of linguistic bias, communalism, casteism, or regionalism and, as such, always remained wedded to secular and national opposition parties and to the politics of national mainstream.

Mr. Kaul is one among those who fought for civil liberties and free elections in 1957 and onwards when despotic clouds were looming large over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Daring and revolutionary, he is rigid and unbending in his stand and has never yielded before pressure or allurement.

He is a man with varied tastes and interests and was also an Urdu short story writer in his student age. He was also editor of the Vakil (English) in Delhi in early sixties, after its publication was banned in Srinagar.

Mr. Kaul is the scion of a noted dynasty of reputed Kaul brothers of Kashmir (known as Vakil brothers also) who were great fighters for people's cause, crusaders for removal of backwardness, pioneers of female education, social reformers, literary figures, journalists and lawyers of great repute. The members of this dynasty have suffered great tribulations and imprisonments during the course of their long struggle.

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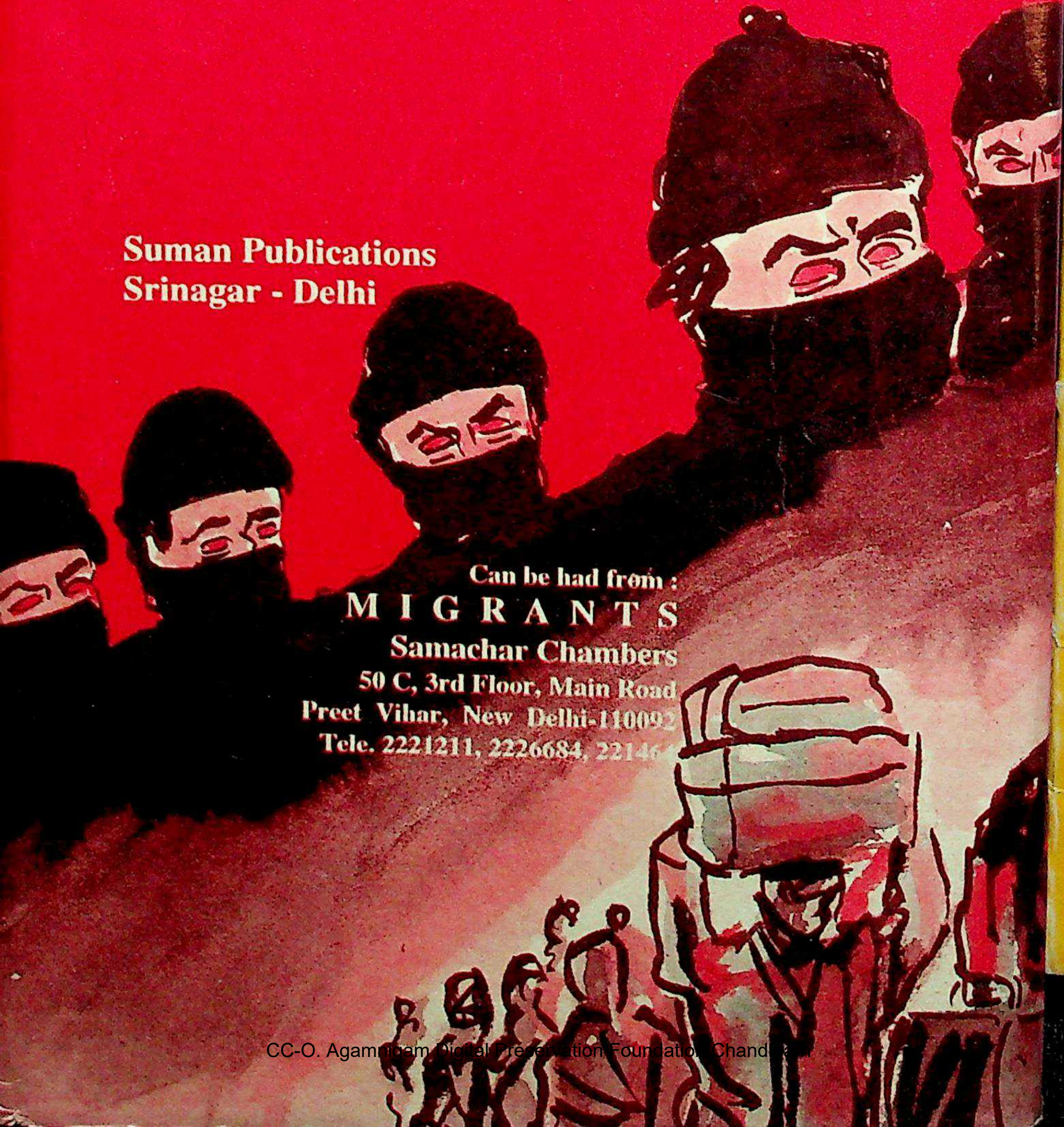

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